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An Analysis of William Lloyd Garrison's Accusations Against the American Colonization Society

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An Analysis of William Lloyd Garrison's Accusations Against the American Colonization Society

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BY

Peggy A. McGill

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Ann McGill, who taught me patience, understanding, and perseverance.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the accusations made by William Lloyd Garrison, founder of the American Anti-Slavery Society, against the American Colonization Society. The charges were based upon his publication Thoughts on African Colonization published in 1832. In the book, he insisted that the Colonization Society fostered ineffectiveness, insincerity, and inconsistency. Because of the Society's ineptitude, he regarded it as a proslavery faction dedicated to racial segregation.

The paper will focus on two important questions. First, was the Colonization Society an antislavery organization? Second, was its objective to aid free blacks or to rid America of the black race.

From hindsight, it is ludicrous to maintain that one individual has the right to own another. Yet, by the end of the American Revolution, slavery had already become entrenched in the country. Around the turn of the 19th Century, many Americans began to ask what was to be done about slavery?

Although efforts to solve the inquiry were made by the Quakers, it was evident to many concerned citizens that a strong national movement was needed. In 1816, men from both north and south met in Washington, D.C., examined the problem and founded the American Colonization Society. While dedicated to colonizing freedmen in Africa, members

also hoped to encourage slaveowners to emancipate by offering emigration as an incentive. Within six years, the Society established the colony of Liberia. As members labored to improve colonial conditions, a different philosophy evolved among northern radicals. Abolitionists, led by Garrison, demanded that slavery end immediately without colonization. Because the two factions approached a similar issue with contrasting ideologies, conflict was inevitable.

Although Garrison leveled numerous charges against the American Colonization Society, there is strong evidence that, while conservative, the Society hoped to eliminate slavery in a peaceful manner. In addition, colonizationists genuinely sought to aid the freedmen who suffered discrimination. Members of the Society felt that black emigration to Africa would solve the race problem. Although their solution may sound racist as well as naive, Garrisonian abolitionists were equally naive in their belief that freedom meant equality.

After Garrison discredited the American Colonization Society, it became a private emigration bureau. Ironically, following the Civil War, some black leaders promoted their own colonization movements and contacted the Society for information. Considering the Jim Crow laws passed during and after Reconstruction, colonization in the 20th Century became synoymous with developing a black nationality.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis analyzes the charges that William Lloyd Garrison brought against the American Colonization Society between the years of 1832 and 1839. While colonization normally occupies a small footnote in many American History textbooks, at one time it inspired a large following and was for nearly twenty years the only organized antislavery movement in 19th Century America.

The paper will focus on the philosophical differences between the colonizationists and the Garrisonians. There is a great deal of evidence to indicate that despite Garrison's accusations, the Society was an antislavery organization. It demonstrated genuine concern for the free black as well as the slave.

In the last twenty years, historians have been very critical of the Society. Although little scholarly work has been completed on the topic, it is generally assumed that the colonizationists were racists who were more interested in assuaging guilty white consciences than in helping black people. One of the few publications that credits the Society with being a valid movement is Early Lee Fox's dissertation, The American Colonization Society, published in 1909. Though well researched, it offers little snythesis. In 1961, P. J. Staudenraus published The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865. The work is interesting and presents an excellent overview of the Society. However,

the author tends to stress the Society's involvement with the suppression of the African Slave Trade, while neglecting other equally important topics. Thomas E. Drake's Quakers and Slavery in America, (1965) offers a superb indepth history of Quaker involvement in antislavery. Sheldon H. Harris's, Paul Cuffe: Black America and the African Return, (1972) investigates the first black colonizationist in America. Also, Merton L. Dillon describes the life of a leading colonizationist in Benjamin Lundy and the Struggle for Negro Freedom, (1966).

Books about the radical abolitionists have tended to extol their virtues. There are two very good biographies of William Lloyd Garrison. Walter Merrill's, Against Wind and Tide (1963) is both readable and informative, though the author tends to apologize for Garrison's actions. Another biography which makes Garrison appear more human is John L. Thomas's, The Liberator, (1963). Although the writer presents a general description of Garrison's life, his main thesis concerns Garrison and the abolition movement. For an explanation of the philosophy of immediate emancipation, Aileen S. Kraditor's, Means and Ends in American Abolitionism, (1967) is an excellent study. Although written for the more advanced student, it contains insight into the abolitionists.

In recent years, black nationialism has become a topic for some historians. Two excellent general overviews of the subject are Rodney Carlisle's, The Roots of Black

Nationalism, (1975), and Floyd J. Miller's, The Search for a Black Nationality, (1975). Both publications examine the root and development of the movement.

CHAPTER I

ROOTS OF ANTISLAVERY AND COLONIZATION IN AMERICA

In 1619, a Dutch man-of-war sailed slowly up the James river and anchored safely off the coast of Virginia. In its cargo hold, it carried the first blacks to arrive in America.[1] Further north, in New England, John Winthrop noted in his journal on December 12, 1638, that Captain William Pierce of Salem had just returned to Boston from the West Indies carrying Negroes for sale.[2]

By the late 17th Century, slavery had evolved along geographical lines. Southerners relied upon slave labor for cultivating tobacco, indigo, and rice, while northern colonists used bondsmem as household servants. New England shippers, especially the commercial merchants of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, made enormous profits from the slave trade.

As colonists from the middle and southern colonies moved westward, they became more dependent upon slavery. By the turn of the 18th Century, some British statesmen and American Colonials, who were inspired by the Great Awakening and the English philosophers, questioned the morality of the institution. The most important protesters were the Quakers or the Society of Friends.

The Society of Friends

In addition to several perceptive writers, who emphasized that slaves should be treated as indentured servants and freed gradually, the Proprietor of Pennsylavnia, William Penn, suggested a concrete emancipation plan. He recommended that slaves brought into the colony could be freed after fourteen years provided they would pay the Friends two-thirds of what they produced from a parcel of land which would be allocated by the colonial officials. Unfortunately, his idea fell upon deaf ears, and in 1700, the Quaker dominated legislature passed the "Black Code", in which slaves were bound for life.[3]

By the 1750's, failure turned to success. Two Friends, John Woolman, a pacifist tailor from New Jersey, and Anthony Benezet, a school teacher from Philadelphia who became the foremost antislavery propagandist of his time, formed an alliance. While Benezet denounced the hideous system through the power of the written word, Woolman traveled the countryside on horseback encouraging Quaker slaveholders to emancipate their slaves.[4] Even though their methods were effective, the process was slow and cumbersome. As they continued their work, they were unaware that an ancient confrontation between England and France would offer them their most useful tool.

In 1756, the clouds of war that hovered over America's western frontier burst into a major struggle between the great European powers. Utilizing the strategy of punishment

and reward, Woolman and Benezet insisted that the destruction of the war was due to the perpetuation of slavery. The correlation frightened many prominent Quakers. In 1758, Woolman and Benezet influenced the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting to remove any slaveholding administrators who continued to buy and sell slaves. The symbolic stoning of Quaker slaveowners in Pennsylvania, known as the Discipline, moved other Yearly Meetings from New England to North Carolina to adopt the same rule, and in 1761, the British Society of Friends enacted a similar measure.[5]

To Woolman and Benezet, this initial step offered another unforeseen opportunity. Because slaveholding officials were absent from the Yearly Meetings, the antislavery faction of the Society introduced proposals stating that any member refusing to free his slaves faced immediate expulsion. By the early 1780's, most Quaker assemblies in colonial North America had adopted the resolution.[6]

The Society successfully eliminated slavery but emancipation failed to produce equal rights. What was to be done with the freedmen? Once more, Benezet heard the call to arms. Drawing upon the idea of a previous Quaker writer, he approached distinguished members of the Continental Congress in 1774, and proposed that freed slaves should be colonized "somewhere between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River."[7] In response, the gentlemen dismissed his recommendation as sheer folly. Undaunted, he continued

inundating his opponents with requests, pleas, and in the midst of his frustration, even insults, but the grumblings heard from the stalwart Massachusetts men concerning British tyranny and oppression overshadowed any proposal. Convinced that he failed, Benezet spent the rest of his days expounding the evils of the slave trade.[8]

The American Revolution and Early Colonizationists

During the war, Quaker influence waned because of their pacifist vows. Criticized as "loyalists". since Societies on both sides of the ocean communicated as often as possible with one another, they suffered jeers and accusations. In an effort to quell the suspicions, the "Friends" decided to refrain from political intervention.[9]

The War for Independence instilled pride into the American public. Patriots cheered as British soldiers boarded chipper ships and sailed home. But as the infant nation celebrated the defeat of English rule, an important question remained. How could men value freedom, and yet deny it to others?

Southerners insisted that the system was historically entrenched. Through entail, they inherited slaves but also the overpowering debt of their fathers. By adhering to their antiquated economic system, they continually pledged next year's crops to pay for last year's bills, and thus found no realistic reason for emancipation. Nevertheless, some southern states, like Virginia, responded to

revolutionary vigour and relaxed the manumission laws following the war.[10]

Influenced by the egalitarian rhetoric of the American Revolution, Vermont and Massachusetts (including Maine) passed gradual abolition laws in the late 1770's. When Pennsylvania adopted a similar act in 1780, Quakers were surprised since they did not expect such benevolence from Presbyterians.[11] After the war, five more states passed manumission laws: New Hampshire in 1783; Rhode Island and Connecticut in 1784; New York in 1799; and New Jersey in 1804.[12]

Much like the emancipated Quaker slaves, the northern freedmen realized that abolition failed to produce equal rights. The few blacks who gained employment received only meager wages, while others foraged the streets seeking the necessities of life. Disgusted with the impoverished conditions, they begged, robbed, and terrorized residents. In response to the increase in crime, northern states forced the freedmen to adhere to the same "slave codes" that regulated slaves and Indians. Officials required passes for free blacks seen in town after dark, or for leaving the city limits. Some state constitutions permitted voting, but free blacks often suffered insults, and in some cases, physical altercation, if they exercised their franchise. Freedmen could not own property or livestock and were exempted from bearing arms, even though military duty was mandatory. For those convicted of infractions, the authorities meted out

swift and severe punishments. For example, in Rhode Island, bad housekeeping could lead to re-enslavement for a specified period of time.[13]

Even for the freedmen who gained economic opportunity, legal segregation limited their freedom. They lived in restricted areas, their children attended separate schools, they married only blacks or Indians, and they buried their families in black cemeteries.[14] Realizing their inequality in white society, some affluent black leaders discussed the possibilities of encouraging immigration to another country in order to restore dignity and confidence. They felt that a return to the continent of black origin would serve two purposes. First, in a country where the white population was scarce, blacks would not only obtain freedom, but also equality. Second, by enhancing their quality of life, they could demonstrate to masters that emancipation would erase the stain of inferiority.

In order to promote their project, leaders in Rhode Island formed the African Union Society in November, 1780. This black organization dedicated itself to reconstructing black culture and promoting its members to emigrate. Further north in Boston, blacks who shared a similar idea, united with the Society.[15] Their efforts were endless. They canvassed, cajoled, and coerced prospective participants.

By the 1790's, a lack of unity and financial support compromised their diligent work. Realizing that white

economic and political assistance was vital, they enlisted the aid of the Reverend Samuel Hopkins of Newport and William Thornton, a concerned Quaker slaveowner from the West Indies. As long time supporters of colonization, both white men anxiously acknowledged the Society's request and actively sought help from benevolent white associations in both America and England. Again the chord of disunity sounded. Whites denied economic support because of apathetic feelings about the project, and some free blacks felt that the inclusion of whites in the movement jeopardized their objectives. Their fears intensified when Hopkins and Thornton outwardly argued over the right of leadership. After suffering other failures, the Society disbanded in 1808, but the spirit remained alive.[16] To many free blacks, oppressed by the handicap of segregation, equality meant colonization. With this thought in mind, a free black sea captain stepped forward and became the first American to colonize freedmen on the shores of the West Coast of Africa.

Paul Cuffe Slocum was born a free black on January 17, 1759, on one of the Elizabeth Islands off the coast of Massachusetts. After his father died, Cuffe inherited part of a farm, but he soon left home and went to sea. In 1776, the British captured the ship's crew and interred them in New York for three months. After his release, he made one more voyage to the Caribbean and then entered into a sea trading and blockade running business. By the turn of the

19th Century, he had acquired several ships and amassed a sizable amount of cash.[17]

The American Revolution provided more opportunities for Cuffe, but the philosophical idea of fighting oppression for freedom presented a painful reality. Even though he paid the same prescribed taxes as whites, Massachusetts voting laws disfranchised him. Enraged by such blatant discrimination, he refused to relinquish any money for property assessment for three years. Eventually, Government officials charged him with evasion, and, in retaliation, he and six other free blacks filed a petition with the General Court requesting dispensation. The court dismissed their plea without a rational explanation. After trying other legal recourse and again failing, he acquiesced.[18]

His interests in Africa also stemmed from his religious belief. In 1808, he became a member of the Westport Society of Friends. Through their influence, he developed a plan that would induce tribal chiefs to abstain from the slave trade. He recommended a program in which several free blacks, who had assimilated western culture, would relocate to the African Coast and develop a commercial agricultural community.[19]

In hopes of gaining support for his program, Cuffe sailed from Philadelphia harbor on New Year's Day in 1811, bound for the West Coast of Africa. Fifty-eight days later, he arrived in the British colony of Sierra Leone, which was founded by Granville Sharp and a group of other

philanthropic Quaker colonizationists as a haven for slaves freed during the American Revolution. Even though he encountered some problems from colonial officials, he made observations and founded the Friendly Society, which was designed to facilitate economic opportunity through trade with the African Institution in Britain.[20]

After his return to America, he proposed his program to government officals and received their support. Even though the War of 1812 pre-empted his emigration movement, he spoke in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York influencing free blacks to colonize after the confrontation ended. True to his faith in his project, he started making preparations after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent. His efforts proved successful and on December 10, 1815, he travelled to Sierra Leone. Besides Cuffe and the crew, thirty-eight eager free blacks--eighteen adults and twenty children--boarded the ship. Because only eight of them could afford their passage, the sea captain reached into his pocket and personally financed the journey for the remaining emigrants. After a stormy crossing, they arrived safely at their destination on February 3, 1816. Although the British officials received the colonists with some reservation, in time, they relinquished to each adult, free black, male a "lot of land in the town, and fifty acres of 'good land' in the country, or more in proportion to their families."[21]

Two months later, Cuffe returned to America and started preparations for another trip. Unfortunately, age claimed

its victim and the old sea captain's health weakened. In the remaining months of his life, he contacted several influential people both black and white, in hopes of creating a national movement for total black colonization. He wrote to James Forten, a prosperous free black businessman, who was Secretary of an organization which promoted education for blacks, the African Institution of Philadelphia. The positive response led Cuffe to believe that freedmen supported his plan. In fact, in a letter dated January 25, 1817, Forten stressed the importance "that they [free blacks] will never become a people until they come out from amongst the white people."[22] Cuffe's elation soon turned to desolation, when he received another communication from Forten stating that he denounced the idea because so many freedmen feared that colonization would eventually mean forced deportation.[23] Previous disappointments taught Cuffe a valuable lesson. Realizing that black support might be unobtainable, he began contacting whites for assistance.

In 1816, he wrote to the Reverend Robert Finley of Basking Ridge New Jersey and Samuel J. Mills, a missionary and founder of the American Bible Society in New York. These clergymen hoped to establish an organization for relocating blacks to an area that would be more favorable since they felt that the stigma of slavery and segregation denied freedmen equal rights in white society. Their swift response to Cuffe's letter not only assured him of their

interest, but also filled the captain with visions of triumph. Before Cuffe could reply, they inundated him with letters requesting information about his trips to West Africa, and suggested that he become a leader for their proposed organization and future expeditions. The three men formed an alliance and communicated on a regular basis. He continued to work with them, and the close bond of friendship brought Cuffe an unexpected honor. While the shadow of death clouded the captain's last days, the intellectual Mills traveled over one hundred miles to sit at the bedside of his peer--a poorly educated black man.[24]

Cuffe died on September 7, 1817. Many friends and admirers eulogized him in letters and speeches, and the American Colonization Society recorded his contributions in the minutes of their first anniversary meeting. They stated that

> . . . In the death of Paul Cuffee the society has lost a most useful advocate, the people of color a warm and disinterested friend, and society a valuable member. His character alone ought to be sufficient to rescue the people to which he belonged from the unmerited aspersions which have been cast on them.[25]

Cuffe's life was filled with unique accomplishments. Lacking a proper education, he amassed a sizable fortune, while suffering from bias and discrimination. As a black man, he joined a religion which normally denied admission to his race. He transcended the color barrier by moving in both black and white circles with equal confidence and respect. At great personal expense and danger, he actively

sought an answer to a very perplexing condition, and in the final assessment, convinced white Americans that with perseverance and action anything was possible.

The Founding of the American Colonization Society

Both northerners and southerners showed interest in the colonization movement. In hopes that emigration would promote gradual emancipation, Thomas Jefferson stressed in his publication, Notes on Virginia, that slave children should be nurtured by their parents, educated at public expense, and sent as freedmen to another area which would be more receptive to their needs.[26]

Jefferson comprehended the irony between his Declaration that "all men are created equal", and enslaving men. But as a southerner and a realist, he understood that, unlike the northern states, the black population in some southern states amounted to one-third, even one-half of the total residents. For example, the "Old Dominion" had a slave population of fourty-one percent, and a free black population of two percent by the turn of the 19th Century.[27] Taking into account the excessive number of blacks, Jefferson maintained that some masters agreed with gradual emancipation but were reluctant to free slaves because of possible mass insurrection.

Virginian slaves, influenced by the relaxed Virginia Manumission law and the revolutions in Haiti, grew impatient by 1800. Though some blacks were emancipated, many others remained under the yoke of oppression. Frequent rebellions

such as Gabriel's insurrection left a bloody path for whites to trod. Angered over the procrastination of their masters to free them, a few slaves grabbed clubs, shovels, axes, or any instrument that was capable of meting out swift retribution, and rampaged throughout the countryside. As quickly as the confrontations occurred, officials suppressed the actions, and the convicted insurgents were executed.[28]

Although government authorities suppressed the insurrection and restored order, Virginian leaders anticipated further violence. Since some legislators thought that the freedmen had encouraged the slaves to rebel, they passed legislation in 1801 which restricted movement for both slave and free black. Believing that the south must be spared total destruction and chaos, they enacted a measure in 1805 which prohibited manumission without deportation.[29] In order to secure a potential place to colonize free blacks, they prompted Governor James Monroe to enter into secret negotiations with President Jefferson. Monroe requested that a portion of the Louisiana territory be appropriated as an ". . . asylum for the free negroes and mulattoes and such as may be hereafter emancipated, . . ."[30] The proposal failed because Jefferson felt that it was not in his power to relinquish the land.[31]

After the War of 1812, some Virginia planters contemplated the economic future of their beloved south. To them, the institution chained southerners to an antiquated system, and prevented them from advancing into a more

Together with Key, they cavassed the city soliciting support.[35]

Concerned men from both the north and south met in December, 1816, in a small, smoke-filled room at the Davis Hotel in Washington, D.C. Under the direction of Henry Clay, in the presence of such historical figures as John Randolph, Richard Bland Lee, Edmund Lee, Daniel Webster, Francis Scott Key, and several clergy members, the American Colonization Society was formed. Since Mercer's plan had already been adopted by the legislature, Virginia became the first state to endorse the project.[36]

On December 28, the membership assembled in the House of Representatives to elect officers and write a constitution. Supreme Court Chief Justice Bushrod Washington became President, and William H. Crawford, Henry Clay, John Taylor of Caroline, and Andrew Jackson were among the numerous Vice Presidents.[37] According to the Constitution, other positions included a Secretary and a Treasurer. Article IX maintained that a Board of Managers be created which " shall conduct the business of the Society, and take such measures for effecting its object as they shall think proper, ..." In addition, Article X provided for the establishment of auxiliary societies "which shall co-operate with its [their] funds . . .."[38]

Believing that Sierra Leone could be used as an example for the American endeavor, Washington appointed Samuel J. Mills and Ebenezer Burgess to make an exploratory visit to

London and Africa in search of a prospective colony. After a successful crossing, the emissaries met leading tribal chiefs and purchased land on Sherbro Island, south of the British holding.[39]

In February, 1820, the Elizabeth sailed from New York harbor bound for African shores. Along with two colonial agents and a representative of the Society, eighty-eight passengers weathered a stormy crossing. Unfortunately, the poor climate proved unhealthy for the colonists, and within a few weeks all the agents and twenty of the freedmen perished. This disaster failed to deter the Society. On June 20, 1822, the brig Strong embarked from Baltimore with a newly appointed official and thirty-five free blacks. Arriving on August 8, they quickly joined the survivors and founded the colony of Liberia, meaning liberty.[40]

Even though problems occurred because of limited supplies, and some members argued over who founded the society, conditions for the colonists improved.[41] In May, 1823, the colonial agent, Jehudi Ashmun, reported to Washington that "we are now one hundred and fifty strong, all in health, . . . have about fifty houses, including three store houses. . . ."[42] Encouraged by the results, several members contemplated expanding the objectives from colonizing freedmen to emancipating southern slaves.

Endnotes

[1]James Bowden, The History of the Society of Friends in America, 2 vols. (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1972), 2:187.

[2]Winthrop D. Jordan, White Over Black, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 67.

[3]William Penn, "The Free Society of Traders," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 5 (1881):45. See also: Drake, Quakers, pp. 19-21.

[4]Thomas E. Drake, Quakers and Slavery in America, (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1965), pp. 62-3. See also: C. G. Woodson, "Anthony Benezet," Journal of Negro History 3 (January, 1917):37-50.

[5]Ibid., pp. 61-2.

[6]Ibid., pp. 71-84.

[7]Betty Fladeland, Men and Brothers, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1972), p. 29.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Drake, Quakers, p. 90.

[10]John Chester Miller, The Wolf by the Ears, (New York: The Free Press, 1977), pp. 21-2.

[11]Drake, Quakers, pp. 91-2.

[12]Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860, (New York York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 11-2.

[13]Lorenzo Johnston Greene, The Negro in Colonial New England, (New York: Atheneum, 1968) p. 299.

[14]James Truslow Adams, "Disfranchisement of Negroes in New England," American Historical Review 30 (April 1925):543-47. See also: Greene, The Negro in Colonial New England, p. 303.

[15]Floyd J. Miller, The Search for a Black Nationality, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1975), pp. 4-12. See also: Fladeland, Men and Brothers, p. 82, and Archibald Alexander, D.D., A History of Colonization on the Western Coast of Africa, (Philadelphia: William S. Martien, 1846; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), pp. 55-6.

[16]Miller, The Search for a Black Nationality, pp. 8-20.

[17]Sheldon H. Harris, Paul Cuffe, Black America and the African Return, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972), p. 15.

[18]Ibid., pp. 19-20, and 159. See also: Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," The Journal of Negro History 8 (April 1923):155, 166.

[19]Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," 160. See also: Harris, Paul Cuffe, p. 42.

[20]Charles Stuart, A Memoir of Granville Sharp, (New York: The American Anti-Slavery Society, 1836; reprint ed., Westport, Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970), pp. 40-1. See also: Mary Beth Norton , "The Fate of Some Black Loyalists of the American Revolution," Journal of Negro History, 58 (October 1973):424-26, Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," pp. 171-72, and Harris, Paul Cuffe, pp. 50, 51, and 63..

[21]Sherwood, "Paul Cuffe," pp. 183-84. See also: Harris, Paul Cuffe, p. 63, and Issac V. Brown, Biography of the Rev. Robert Finley, D.D., (Philadelphia: John W. Moore, 1857; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1969), p. 141.

[22]Harris, Paul Cuffe, p. 244.

[23]Ibid., pp. 68, 153, and 154ff.

[24]Gardiner Spring, D.D. Memoirs of the Rev. Samuel J. Mills, (London: Printed for Francis Westley, 1820), p. 106.

[25]The American Colonization Society, The First Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States,* 93 vols. (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1818; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969)1:5. The name of Cuffe has been spelled as Cuffee in some material.

*Any further reference to this report will be identified as ACS, First Annual Report.

[26]Thomas Jefferson, Notes on Virginia, edited by William Peden (London: Printed for John Stockdale, 1787; reprinted with Introduction and Notes by William Penden, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), pp. 137-38. For letters concerning proposed colonization of Virginian slaves between Jefferson as President and James Monroe as Governor of Virginia, see: Thomas Jefferson, The Works of Thomas Jefferson, collected and edited by Paul Leicester Ford, 12 vols. (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1905)9:315-19, and 373-75.

[27]U.S. House of Representatives, U.S. Census Office, Second Census of the United States, 1800, pp. 2H and 2I.

[28]Joseph Cephas Carroll, Slave Insurrections in the United States, 1800-1865, (n.p.: Chapman & Grimes, Inc., 1938; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1968), pp. 48-76.

[29]Ibid., pp. 57 and 67.

[30]Virginia. Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts from January 1, 1799, to December 31, 1807. Arranged and Edited by H. W. Flournoy, 15 vols., (Richmond: n.p., 1890; reprint ed., New York: Kraus Reprint Corporation, 1968)9:420.

[31]Ibid., p. 433.

[32]P. J. Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 105. See also: Douglas R. Egerton, "Its Origin is not a Little Curious": A New Look at the American Colonization Society," Journal of the Early Republic 5 (Winter 1985):468-70.

[33]Alexander, A History of Colonization, p. 75. See also: Egerton, "Its Origin," p. 470.

[34]Alexander, A History of Colonization, pp. 77-78.

[35]Staudenraus, African Colonization Movement, pp. 27 and 31.

[36]Ibid., p. 27 and 31.

[37]ACS, First Annual Report, 1:11. See also: William Jay, Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization, and American Anti-Slavery Societies. (n.p.: R. G. Williams, 1838; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), pp. 11-2, and Staudenraus, African Colonization Movement, pp. 29-30.

[38]Brown, Biography of Robert Finley, p. 118

[39]Mills, Memoirs of the Reverend Samuel J. Mills, pp. 118-19. See also: ACS, First Annual Report, 1:11-2.

[40]Ralph Randolph Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun, (n.p.: James C. Dunn, 1835; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), pp. 75-6. See also: The American Colonization Society, The Sixth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States,* 93 vols. (Washington, D.C.: n.p., 1823;

reprint ed., New York: Negro University Press, 1969), 6:11-2.

*Any further reference to this report will be identified as ACS, Sixth Annual Report.

[41]Egerton, "Its Origin" pp.464-80. For a detailed overview of the founding of the American Colonization Society, see: H. N. Sherwood, "The Formation of the American Colonization Society," The Journal of Negro History, 2 (July 1917):200-27.

[42]Gurley, Life of Jehudi Ashmun, p. 167.

CHAPTER II

RISE OF GARRISONIANISM

On a cold December day in 1805, a scream of a newborn baby boy, William Lloyd Garrison, echoed throughout a small house on School Street in Newburyport, Massachusetts, just next door to the Presbyterian vestry where the famous revivalist George Whitefield drew his last breath thirty-five years before. After being deserted by his alcoholic father, young Garrison fell under the exacting religious influence of his domineering mother, who had been converted to the Baptist belief during the Second Great Awakening. Garrison was an eleven year old school boy when the American Colonization Society originally met in Washington, D. C.[1] Within fifteen years, he would prove to be the Society's most formidable foe.

As a young boy, he obtained several apprenticeships with the assistance of family and friends. After failing to impress any of his employers, Garrison embarked on a printing career as an apprentice to the editor of the Newburyport Herald. By laboring long hours, he not only learned all the facets of the publishing business, but wrote jovial, frivolous letters concerning social mores under the pseudonym of "An Old Bachelor." Gradually, he extended his literary accomplishments by composing short fictional

stories, and then analyzing American and European foreign policy.[2]

These first serious articles detailed political misgivings. Garrison blamed his father's alcoholism and desertion on the Embargo Act of 1807 passed during Jefferson's Presidency. The coastal town of Newburyport depended heavily on foreign trade, and under the Federalists' neutrality policy, it prospered. When relations with Britain weakened and suspicions flared over the movements of Napoleon, America's free-trading measures disappeared. For sea going men, like ship master Abijah Garrison, import/export restrictions produced grave consequences. As the economic depression gripped the small community, despondent and morose sailors lined sour, odorous soup kitchens instead of trafficking shipyards and wharves. Out of desperation, these once strong, independent seamen sought refuge and pity inside the taverns that dotted the city's coastal area. Throughout "Mr. Madison's War" the faltering economy remained unchanged, and while protest ensued and flags stood at halfmast,[3] the young Garrison listened intently to the older residents ridicule the policies of the tyrannical Virginian slaveholding landbarons.

During his apprenticeship, Garrison formed a friendship with Caleb Cushing, a Harvard graduate, who hoped to enter politics by practicing law. Cushing, who had once written an article in the antislavery publication, the North

American Review, joined the Herald on a part-time basis. Within a few months, he not only became Garrison's close confident and mentor, but enriched the young writer's education by offering free access to an extensive library.[4]

Cushing abhorred slavery, but believed that radical emancipation posed serious problems. He felt that colonization would solve the old perplexing question of what to do with the ex-slave. To Garrison, who recalled his mother's strict religious belief that the salvation of mankind could only be ascertained by adherence to Christian principles, the ideas of the flamboyant and charismatic Cushing appeared sound. By 1826, Garrison's apprenticeship ended, and he left the printing office after violently arguing with Cushing over a political election.[5] Although the two men became bitter enemies, Garrison nevertheless gained valuable insight from his former associate.

Garrison arrived in Boston in 1826 filled with dreams about his future. As a boy, he felt both neglected by his absent father and imprisoned by his overpowering mother. Forced to move frequently because of poverty, he made no friends, and his only peer was his brother--six years his elder and a frequent tavern patron. Through his dark, dismal childhood, he longed for attention. He revered heroes such as those brave, valiant men whose courageous deeds were celebrated in verses and songs. They fought injustice and tyranny in the name of liberty and freedom. In this city of over fifty thousand, the descendants of this

hearty stock walked the streets and mesmerized the crowds with their simple, straightforward oratory. To a young man seeking guidance and respect, what other town would have been more appropriate than the one that boasted the firebrand conservatism of the distinguished Daniel Webster or the stalwart John Quincy Adams?[6]

Even though he lacked funds, Garrison acquired a room in a boarding house in the middle class part of the city. Unlike the old, rich families of Beacon Hill, the residents of these less affluent streets held common mannerisms and beliefs. They rejected Unitarianism because it denied the Trinity, and therefore, strictly contrasted with their orthodox doctrines.[7]

Garrison's introduction to antislavery occurred in Newburyport, but he gained his religious orientation in Winthrop's City on the Hill. He listened attentively to Lyman Beecher, who disregarded the viewpoints of his adversaries and theorized that man, a free agent, has the power to absolve sin and avoid retribution. If man refuses to accept his responsibility and become pure, then he will suffer punishment. For example, as long as a slaveholder kept his bondsmen enslaved, he was a sinner, and if the situation was not corrected, he faced the wrath of God on Judgment Day. Beecher maintained that the non-slaveholding populous was obligated to provide the necessary guidance and persuasion in order to entreat the master to act without haste.[8]

Garrison fell deeply under the spell of Beecher, who like St. George fought the dragons of slavery, drinking, adultery, and stealing. He exulted him by stating that "Lyman Beecher has no equal," and the preacher gained his strength by "Truth--Truth--delivered in a childlike simplicity and affection."[9] Like Cushing, Beecher professed that colonization protected the freedmen against segregation, and promoted emigration as a means to gain equal rights for the ex-slaves.

After several months spent searching for employment, Garrison secured a position as an editor with two newspapers. Although he was interested in other reform issues, such as peace and temperance crusades, he was particularly fascinated by the slavery issue. Attending lectures and keeping abreast of antislavery movements, he hoped to find a way to involve himself in the inevitable confrontation between abolitionists and slave masters. Quite unexpectedly, he gained his opportunity when colonizationist Benjamin Lundy visited Boston in March, 1828.[10]

In 1815, Benjamin Lundy, a staunch Quaker, founded an antislavery group in Ohio known as the Union Humane Society. He periodically published the Genius of Universal Emancipation in some western states and moved it to Baltimore in the mid 1820's.[11] Believing that he would gain better moral and financial support in Boston, he journeyed north.

Lundy, a long time supporter of the American Colonization Society, believed that gradual emancipation was the only viable answer to the slavery problem. He opposed those societies that were started only for the removal of the free black. When he learned that a new organization was formed in Maryland dedicated only to exportation, he ranted that "I am sick of the continual clack about the removal of the free people of color, . . . It will never, of itself, do a pin's worth of good. I could not give the toss of a copper for a system of philanthropy that extends no further than this."[12]

Upon his arrival in Boston, he secured a room at the same boarding house as Garrison. Although Lundy stated that Garrison "had not yet turned his attention particulary to the anti-slavery question,"[13], he nevertheless gave his "approbation of my doctrines," in print before the Quaker departed the city. In November, 1828, Lundy returned to New England, and asked Garrison to assist him in editing the newspaper. He informed Lundy that he was working on "a paper in Vermont from which he could not then disengage himself."[14] Garrison finally acquiesced when, in 1829, Lundy returned from one of his many trips to Haiti in which he helped relocate one hundred and nineteen slaves who were sponsored for by the North Carolina Society of Friends.[15] Embarking on a trip to search for other suitable locations for freed slaves, perhaps Texas and Canada, he agreed to have Garrison edit the Genius.[16]

Although Garrison revered Lundy for his strong convictions concerning antislavery, an argument occurred between the two co-editors in the late summer of 1829. Lundy abhorred slavery, but he felt that only gradual emancipation would be accepted in the South; and thus, he concluded that the philosophy of immediate emancipation might provoke a radical reaction from that area. In contrast, Garrison rigidly denounced the method of slowly freeing slaves and colonizing, even though he allowed the use of his name in a Genius advertisement which promoted a colonization project.[17] Garrison insisted "that no valid excuse can be given for the continuance of the evil a single hour,"[18] and the men settled the disagreement by negotiating. Garrison based his editorials on the platform of immediate emancipation, while Lundy promoted gradual freedom.

The arrangement appeared to be rather congenial, but in the November 13, 1829 issue, Garrison defamed a Newburyport merchant, Francis Todd, for transporting slaves from Baltimore to New Orleans. The paper ceased publication, Garrison was arrested, charged with libel, and found guilty. Unable to pay his fine, he remained in jail. Although this moment appeared to be the lowest ebb in Garrison's life, Henry Clay, Vice-President of the American Colonization Society, offered payment on the editor's behalf. Before Clay could act, New York City philanthropist Arthur Tappan, a heavy contributor to the American Colonization Society,

intervened. Authorities released Garrison on June 5, 1830.[19] Because of the legal implications, the two editors separated permanently, even though Garrison still supported some of Lundy's immigration projects.[20]

On January 1, 1831, Garrison began publishing his own newspaper called the Liberator. He dedicated the newspaper to the philosophy of immediate emancipation as dictated by the abolitionists. The original editions dealt with the Walker Appeals, which demanded that the Blacks be armed so that they might free themselves.[21] Garrison maintained that he deplored militancy, and insisted that he was dedicated to the concept of moral suasion, but he felt that the document should be printed since it explored a sensitive concept of antislavery.

In this same issue, he composed those famous lines that would echo to the eastern seaboard, westward to the Mississippi River, south to the Gulf of Mexico, and north to Canada.

> I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. . . . but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest--I will not equivocate--I will not excuse--I will not retreat a single inch-AND I WILL BE HEARD.[22]

In the Liberator, he committed his talents to end slavery, but he also dreamed about being known as the Universal Reformer and called for the assistance of followers for other areas of concern. Upset because the editor of the Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette failed to

recognize him, Garrison stated defiantly "that, if my life be spared, my name shall one day be known so extensively as to render private enquiry unnecessary; and known, too, in a praiseworthy manner."[23]

His words and actions united abolitionists. On November 13, 1831, fifteen men gathered to hear Garrison speak concerning the need for a New England Antislavery Society. In keeping with strict religious principles, he announced in advance that at least twelve members would be needed to follow in his footsteps and form an organization. When only nine attendants voted for accepting Garrison's proposal, the meeting abruptly ended. A month later, he decided to accept the nine members, and he designated a committee to draft a constitution. Even though he did not occupy the President's position, since he preferred to spend time on his newspaper and outside reform movements, New Englanders realized that he controlled the Society.[24]

Garrison became increasingly radical. Disappointed because the Society attracted few people, he began to parallel the evils of slavery with the lack of Christian ideals in the United States. In June, 1831, he attempted to start a black college in New Haven, Connecticut, by raising matching funds from affluent freedmen and whites. Assured by a black minister that the community lacked visible signs of prejudice, Garrison left for Philadelphia to acquire substantial funding from the black leaders of the African Insitution. Unfortunately, at a city meeting on September

10, attended by the mayor, alderman, common council, and seven hundred freedmen, resolutions passed maintaining that the proposed school would be "an unwarrantable and dangerous interference with the internal concerns of the states, . . . incompatible with the prosperity (of Yale)."[25]

This and other setbacks convinced Garrison that the slaveowners could not be solely to blame. He felt that the great mass of morally uncommitted citizens were laboring from the misconception that their benevolence was being demonstrated through the work of the American Colonization Society.[26] Determined to provide salvation for the country, Garrison reiterated his pledge "I Will Be Heard."

Endnotes

[1]John L. Thomas, The Liberator, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), p. 16.

[2]Walter M. Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 9-11.

[3]Thomas, Liberator, pp. 18-9.

[4]Ibid., pp. 36-7.

[5]Ibid., pp. 52-3.

[6]Ibid., p. 54.

[7]Ibid., p. 56.

[8]Anne C. Loveland, "Evangelicalism and 'Immediate Emancipation' in American Antislavery Thought", Journal of Southern History, 32 (May 1966):176. For an explanation concerning the urgency of emancipation and repetance in light of the Millennium, see: George Bourne, The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable, (Philadelphia: J. M. Sanderson & Co., 1816), pp. 135-41.

[9]Thomas, Liberator, p. 59.

[10]Ibid., p. 74.

[11]Benjamin Lundy, The Life, Travels and Opinions of Benjamin Lundy, Compiled by His Children, (Philadelphia: William D. Parrish, 1847), pp. 16-25. For complete details on the founding of the Union Humane Society, see: Merton L. Dillon, Benjamin Lundy and the Struggle for Negro Freedom, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966) p. 18-9.

[12]Genius of Universal Emancipation, 7 January 1826.

[13]Lundy, Life, p. 25.

[14]Ibid., p. 29.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Benjamin Lundy, The Diary of Benjamin Lundy, ed. by Fred Landon, (n.p.: n.p. January, 1832; Reprinted from the Ontario Historical Society's, "Papers and Records," Vol. 19, n.d.): p. 3. See also: Thomas, Liberator, p. 89.

[17]Genius, 10 November 1829.

[18]Ibid., 2 September 1829.

[19]Goldwin Smith, D.C.L., The Moral Crusader: William Lloyd Garrison, (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1892), p. 35.

[20]The Liberator, 25 January 1831.

[21]Ibid., 1 January 1831.

[22]Ibid.

[23]William Lloyd Garrison, The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison - 1825-1835, 2 vols., ed. by Walter M. Merrill, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971)1:68-9.

[24]Thomas, Liberator, pp. 139-41.

[25]Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, pp. 63-4.

[26]Thomas, Liberator, pp. 145-46. For details of Garrison's religious beliefs as compared to the Evangelical Church, see: Parker Pillsbury, Acts of the Anti-Slavery Apostles, (Concord, New Hampshire and Rochester, New York: Clague, Wegman, Schlight, & Co., 1883), pp. 20-1.

CHAPTER III

THE CONFLICT: GARRISONIANISM VS. COLONIZATION

In hopes of gaining support for his own movement, and in response to a group of free, affluent blacks, who were afraid of mandatory deportation, William Lloyd Garrison launched a barrage of criticisms against the American Colonization Society. To initiate his attack, he published a provocative discourse entitled Thoughts on African Colonization, (1832), in which he charged the Society with ineffectiveness, insincerity, and inconsistency.

A close examination of Garrison's evidence indicates that he intentionally manipulated facts, rejected important parts of statements, and failed to account for certain actions, objectives, and accomplishments of the Society in order to further his own cause. The following ten accusations are analyzed in the identical order as Garrison wrote them:

It is Pledged not to Oppose the System of Slavery

Garrison maintained that the Society showed no hostility towards slavery. While its is true that the short term objective of the colonizationists was to colonize free people of color, the ultimate extinction of slavery involved a long range plan.[1] They hoped to eliminate this system by

promoting moral influence and encouraging gradual emancipation.

In an effort to subvert their purpose, Garrison presented several piecemeal statements made by the members, which appeared to be counterproductive. For instance, he quoted Gerrit Smith, an affluent New York businessman and a devout colonizationist, as stating that "our Society has nothing to do directly with the question of slavery."[2] Garrison failed to cite the remaining part of the remark in which Smith concluded that they "joyfully admit . . . the successful prosecution of the object . . . must produce influences . . . leading to the voluntary emancipation of the slave, ..."[3] In another speech made by Francis Scott Key, Garrison extracted "To abolition she could not look, and need not look."[4] By omitting the end of Key's address, he led the reader to believe that the word she meant the Society and not the slave state of Maryland.[5]

From the Norfolk Herald, Garrison printed a portion of an article which indicated that no money should be appropriated from Congress for colonization. The actual content contained an argument between two men whose disagreement stemmed from whether the Federal Government or State Legislatures should be approached for funding.[6] Even the famous General Layfette, who tried to eliminate slavery in the French colony of Cayenne, was not safe from Garrison's attack. In the speech made by a member inducting the General into the Society as a Vice-President, Garrison

disregarded his name and inferred that the Frenchman, who fought for liberty by the side of Washington, was associated with an organization that would only liberate slaves after all free blacks were forced to deport.[7]

When Garrison accused the Colonization Society of not being hostile to slavery, he failed to realize the effectiveness of the organization on slaveholders. While he proudly noted that during the past year, the abolitionists succeeded in making the nation aware of the problem, in raising the moral question among slaveowners, and in reforming public opinion,[8] the Society was organizing newly emancipated slaves for settlement in Liberia. Some of their impressive lists contained three hundred slaves owned by one of their officers, William Fitzhugh, of Virginia. Another case involved Governor Ridgely of Maryland, who reportedly freed four hundred slaves in 1829 and sent them to Africa through the assistance of the Society.[9]

They also encouraged female slaveowners to emancipate. A lady near Charlestown, Virginia, liberated ten of her slaves and purchased two others from a nearby plantation for colonization. In Louisa County, Virginia, Patsy Morris manumitted sixteen bondsmen and provided five hundred dollars to defray their emigration expenses.[10]

The Society provided outlets for legal restrictions. When Quakers in North Carolina tried to free their slaves during the early part of the American Revolution, they encountered a peculiar problem. An ex post facto law of

1777 mandated that freedmen who failed to leave the state could be seized and sold back into slavery. The Friends wanted to obey the government while remaining true to their faith. Therefore, they appointed trustees of the Yearly Meeting to hold nominal titles for their slaves until such time as arrangements were possible.[11] When the Colonization Society founded Liberia, the Friends, for the first time in four decades, realized an end to their dilemma. They contacted the colonizationists and swiftly made arrangements to relocate their wards. By December, 1830, with the Society's help, the North Carolinian Quakers aided approximately six hundred and fifty-two slaves to emigrate, and possessed another four hundred and two potential colonists.[12]

While Garrison sat safely at his wooden desk scribbling prolific criticisms and accusations, the Society expended its valuable efforts in assisting such groups and individuals. The key word appeared to be hostile. Even though the colonizationists did not utilize Garrison's harsh terminology, they actively offered an opportunity for many slaveholders to realize moral virtue and emancipate.

It Apologises for Slavery and Slaveholders

Because northern clergy members formed an alliance with southern slaveowners, Garrison accused the Colonization Society of apologizing for slavery and slaveholders. He did not understand that colonizationists preferred this method in order to insure a peaceful end to slavery.

Northern colonizationists understood the inhumanity of slavery, but they knew what drastic measures awaited the country if slavery died a sudden death. Some southern colonizationists felt enslaved themselves, enslaved to an ancient tradition which restricted advancement and contradicted their sound Republican values. Their actions, however, overshadowed their feelings when they suffered jeers and insults by their fellow southerners, and when they envisioned the tragic outcome of a more radical movement.[13]

Because colonizationists felt that both north and south shared the blame for slavery, they decided that only a cooperative effort would destroy the system. They formed a broad base of interest, and negotiated in order to accomplish their goal. Their writings and speeches provided stimulus for Garrison's charges.

He cited passages that made the Society appear to be dedicated to the perpetuation of slavery. For example, Garrison quoted a member of the Society who remarked that "The laws of Virginia now discourage, and very wisely, perhaps, the emancipation."[14] Garrison failed to include the man's compliments to the Society for promoting emancipation in states where legal restrictions severely limited manumissions.[15]

From the organization's newspaper, Garrison extracted a partial statement made by a Maine clergyman who remarked that "Slavery is an evil which is entailed upon the present generation of slaveholders, which they must suffer, <u>whether</u>

they will or not."[16] Garrison omitted an explanation of the content in which the minister concluded that slavery was a national rather than a geographic problem; therefore, "the North should aid the South, in the expense of emancipating and transporting their slaves back to the land of their fathers."[17] Obviously, the northern gentleman considered that only a united effort could end slavery.

Garrison referred to an address made by another northern minister speaking at the formation of the New York State Colonization Society. The reverend maintained that southerners shared the same sympathies, moral sentiments, and love of liberty as did northerners, but slavery "was in being when they were born, and has been forced upon them by a previous generation."[18] Like his New England religious counterpart, this clergyman felt that "if the south received stolen men, the north was especially engaged in the still more odious practice of stealing them."[19]

The Garrisonians charged the Society with apologizing for the slaveholder, and providing an excuse to continue slavery. Garrison's methods were questionable, but his conclusions were partially correct. There were slaveowners who shielded themselves behind the wall of entail. Because they inherited the insitution and the prosperity it provided from their ancestors, it was their obligation to will it to their descendants. To them, slavery had become a system that had been entrenched for almost two hundred years. It controlled the political, social, and economic aspects of

southern society. They argued slavery had to be protected. For these men, the less restricted movement of the free black caused jealousy in the slave and colonization offered control.[20]

These were the same individuals whom the Society attempted to convert. However, to complete their goals and move these men to action, the organization needed a large amount of money. At celebrations, especially the Fourth of July, which symbolized liberty and freedom, northern members criticized slavery in order to draw crowds and obtain needed contributions. From the pulpit, northern clergymen prayed for emancipation, and passed the collection plate. The northern Colonizationists believed the ends justified the means, and so they often closed their eyes and shook the hands of hypocritical slaveowners.[21]

Other types of slaveholders belonged to the Society. These men only freed part of their slaves. Unlike northerners they realized that the slaves endured more than bondage. Denied self-esteem, and lacking education, bondsmen were relegated from childhood to depend upon the master's benevolence or greed for survival. Slaves used the owner's name, lived in his makeshift house, ate his food, labored on his land, married by his approval, and massaged his ego in order to gain his humor. In essence, bondsmen were forced to attach their lives to the same individual, who had been conditioned to own and control them. Approaching the evils of slavery from a different

perspective, some slaveowners argued that freedom presented a serious problem for slaves. For instance, Francis Scott Key owned a black man who was "too old to work or to care for himself." Key questioned whether he should uphold his moral commitment to antislavery and enable the person to live in a society which considered the black race repulsive, or continue to provide for the man.[22]

Ironically, some southern men felt that the Colonizationists failed to placate them. These extremists cursed the Society, because they believed their rights were in jeopardy. Articles signed by "Caius Gracchus" appeared in the Richmond Enquirer in 1825 accusing the Colonizationists of being abolitionists. When the organization requested an appropriation for their plan from Congress, a South Carolinian Senator bellowed that "whereever the Colonization Society has invaded our country, a spirit of hostility to our institutions has immediately sprung up."[23]

Their most formidable southern foe was Robert Turnbull, a devout slaveowner from South Carolina. Under the name of Brutus, he published a book in 1827 criticizing the motives of the Colonization Society. He warned that "The bold and the daring invader attacks openly. . . . He enters our premises undiscovered. He advances, or he recedes in his softly stealing steps, as prudence would dictate, and he strikes the fatal blow, when it is too late for us to avert it."[24] Brutus raved that the Colonization Society was

actually an abolition society which aimed at the total destruction of slavery. He hurled insults at the Society for making speeches and distributing literature throughout the state which demonstrated its sound conviction to root the system from the land. The members' decision to station their headquarters at Washington, D.C. proved to him that they wanted to influence the national government concerning the fate of slavery. In order to convince his readers of a the design between the Society and the government, he quoted one member who addressed a group of officals and requested that they "Lend . . . aid to strike the fetters from the slave, and to spread the enjoyment of unfettered freedom over the whole of our favoured and happy lands."[25] Were these the words of a proslavery society?

Considering the fears of some southern slaveholders, and the objections of northern abolitionists, it appeared that the Colonization Society chose moderation so that they could appeal to all factions. While they tried to placate the southerner in hopes of gaining necessary support, they also tried to appease the immediate emancipationists by diligently working to end the system of slavery. Perhaps some of their methods were objectionable, but certainly not their motives.

It Recognizes Slaves as Property.

When Garrison accused the Society of recognizing slaves as property, he failed to realize that the term was an economic and legal description. From colonial times until the turn of the 19th Century, the system of slavery profited both the north and south. Adopting the role of the supplier, the northern shippers constructed and chartered vessels to transport needed goods to the potential customers. To complete the transactions, southerners exchanged currency in order to satisfy their demand for the necessary labor.

By the early 1800's, manufacturing began in the New England and middle states. Although northern businessmen still depended upon commerce, trade goods became raw and finished materials.[26] The new, growing economy of the north rescued some inhabitants from continuing their traditional practices, and offered them absolution from guilt. Like Garrison, some northerners developed a deep moral conviction concerning the slaveowner's privilege to buy and sell enslaved laborers.

The 18th Century economists maintained that individuals possessed the right to accumulate land and labor in order to produce wealth,[27] and free governments passed laws ensuring the ownership of private property. Even the Fourth and Fifth Amendments to the Constitution attempted to protect the rights of the possessor.

While Garrison understood that the word property degraded the black to a legal status of slavery, he insisted that only the southern slaveowner could absolve himself from sin by freeing his bondsmen. If Garrison believed that "man cannot hold property in man,"[28] why did he insist that the slaveowners possessed the right to emancipate their slaves? Since he concluded that the purchasers of slaves entered into illegal agreements,[29] why did he not attempt, like the Colonization Society, to approach the legal system, and try to amend legislative mandates? He not only opposed working through the government, but he refused to vote. Did he think that anarchy would resolve the issue? At one point, he even drew upon the legacy of the Hartford Convention, and demanded that the north secede from the union, in order to destroy the southern economy.[30] While he was justifiably angry with the south for their role in slavery, did he not envision the calamities that would befall a struggling, infant nation divided in halves?

Unlike many of his countrymen, Garrison realized that blacks were human beings and therefore should not be relegated to the same position as livestock. Unfortunately, instead of unleashing his energies towards correcting terminology, he chose to undermine the Colonization Society by singling out certain members, who by force of habit, uttered the word "property." He extracted a partial speech made by an Indiana man addressing the state auxiliary society expressing that "The Society, from considerations

like these, . . . disclaims the remotest idea of ever disturbing the right of property."[31] The content of the lecture assured the western members, that the organization longed to have slaves freed by consenting masters.[32]

The Colonization Society sought to manipulate state and federal laws. In response to the slave insurrections during the early 1800's, several southern states, including Virginia, passed legislation which disavowed the slaveowners' right to emancipate their bondsmen without providing for deportation.[33] Therefore, the Society offered an outlet and an opportunity to benevolent slaveholders who wished to meet their moral obligations.

A similar instance involved a peculiar provision in the African Slave Trade Law. It specified that potential slaves rescued from illegal slave ships were to be remanded to the respective state officials. The slaves were then to be disposed at the discretion of the authorities. Realizing the inconsistency of the mandate, which indeed empowered slave states to sell recaptured Africans, colonizationists presented a bill in Congress, in 1819. It repealed the statute and transferred custody of the Africans to Federal Marshalls of the United States, until the victims could be returned to Africa.[34]

In order to reach their objectives, they courted men who had political clout. Utilizing this strategy, they hoped to enlist aid from the national and state governments, without incurring undo wrath. For example, one colonizationist

requested that a memorial be presented to Congress outlining the Society's progress. The members hoped thereby to impress Representatives and Senators and to obtain aid needed for maintenance and defense of the colony.[35]

Garrison believed in absolutes, but the Society dealt in ambiguities. Members spoke of the importance of upholding the south's interest and balancing the north's commitment.[36] Their language appeared questionable, but they realized the value of gaining support from both areas. While the Society worked with government, Garrison demanded secession.

It Increases the Value of Slaves

Even though the Colonization Society preferred using moderate language, Garrison did not mince words in accusing colonizationists of attempting to increase the value of slaves. He quoted one lecturer as stating that " . . . the colonization of the free people of color will render the slave who remains in America more obedient, more faithful, more honest, and consequently, more useful to his master."[37] The member intended the statement to be a rhetorical question, and he logically answered that this was an " . . . irresistible appeal which it [the Society] makes to all the powerful sentiments of the heart--the most sordid and degrading, as well as the most benevolent and exalted."[38] Since the remark predated Garrison's attack, it appeared that it was a sincere compromise and not a vindication. In another instance, he included a partial article in which he intended readers to believe that the Society supported

slavery. Actually, their southern foes scribbled the insidious words in an effort to subvert the progress of the organization.[39]

When Garrison tried to discredit the Society, he apparently overlooked the Debate in the Virginia Legislature of 1831 and 1832. After the famous Nat Turner insurrection, southerners argued whether more restrictive slave measures should be instituted. Elected officials entered into heated discussions, and prominent Virginia lawmakers offered alternative plans. Much like Jefferson's proposals, John Randolph recommended that all slaves born after 1840, should be nutured by the master, and at a certain age, hired out until they earned enough money to emigrate. He logically concluded that both interests would be served. Adhering to moral sentiment, the slaveowner could absolve himself through voluntary emancipation, and the slave would be liberated. While Randolph's suggestion was under consideration, a History Professor at the College of William and Mary analyzed his project, concluding that "it [voluntary emancipation and colonization] destroys the value of slaves, and . . . imposes . . . upon the master the intolerable and grievous burthen of raising his young slaves . . . ."[40] Apparently, Garrison failed to ask southerners their feelings concerning the antislavery goals of the Colonization Society.

Both Garrison and the Colonization Society printed certain damaging propaganda in order to further their

movements. Some southern colonizationists maintained that the fear of insurrection would be alleviated if the free black population emigrated. Considering the number of rebellions that occurred in the first decade of the 1800's, they felt that slavery offered a safeguard against violence. Even though most northern clergy members disagreed with these statements, they remained silently rigid in their seats and allowed callous remarks to be spoken at will.[41] Like the Colonization Society, Garrison also offered propaganda. In the Liberator, he published inflamatory articles. For example, Garrison, who always played devil's advocate with Constitutional law, wrote that "The clause in the Constitution should be erased, which tolerates, greatly to the detriment and injustice of the free states, a slave representation in Congress. Why should property be represented from the impoverished south, and not from the opulent north?"[42] While Garrison abhorred violence, he penned this graphic description of the Southampton revolt. "Dreadful retaliation! 'The dead bodies of white and black lying just as they were slain, unburied'--the oppressor and the oppressed equal at last in death--what a spectacle!"[43]

It appeared that the Colonization Society masked its appeals in passive persuasion. In contrast, Garrison hurled threats and accusations against southerners. Because of the harshness and severity of Garrison's words, masters were even more concerned with protecting slavery. Did colonizationists or Garrison increase the value of slaves?

It is the Enemy of Immediate Abolition

Garrison claimed that the Colonization Society was the enemy of immediate abolition. Although correct, he failed to explain why the American Colonization Society chose gradual emancipation. Far more importantly, he failed to state that his method was also slow and cumbersome.

The first antislavery movement, developed by the Quakers and adopted by the northern states, was gradual abolition. Based upon moral considerations, it allowed the system to die a slow, natural death, while absolving the slaveowner from sin and liberating the bondsmen. Plans varied between northern and southern interpretations.

Although Quakers invoked gradual abolition prior to the American Revolution, its concepts were vague and misleading. The methodology incorporated by John Woolman included visiting slaveowners and convincing them that they must free their slaves in order to be absolved from sin.[44] Using rational discussion, he gently prodded the master. While suggesting a possible solution, he left emancipation to their discretion. After offering them words of wisdom to contemplate, he traveled to the next potential convert. Although some of his efforts proved successful, he often had to return frequently to re-enforce his request.

In 1804, a group of emancipationists met in Philadelphia to examine projects that would eliminate slavery. At the American Convention, they advocated gradual abolition and maintained that "we hope to move with care and

circumspection."[45] While working to promote liberation, they felt that federal and state laws must be respected in order to ensure the public welfare. Unfortunately, they wrote in ambiguities and failed to put any proposals in concrete terms.

A strong advocate of antislavery and black equality, Benjamin Lundy published a specific plan for gradual emancipation in his newspaper. He stated that slavery should be abolished by the federal government in all the territories and districts under their control. Furthermore, no new slave states should be admitted to the union, and finally, the domestic slave trade must be ended. Lundy placed emphasis upon the role of national government, but state legislatures, both north and south, were delegated responsibilities. Slave states had to pass laws to provide for gradual and certain emancipation, and eliminate discriminatory mandates against free blacks. In the north, free states were to bestow equal citizenship upon their black residents. National and state governments, in addition to private organizations, were to aid freedmen in voluntary emigration, and an amendment to the Constitution should be ratified repealing the three-fifths compromise.[46] To Lundy, emancipation depended upon political action; and even though he hoped for federal involvement, he felt that southern state governments would, in the end, enact the similar measures of their northern counterparts. He insisted that slavery could only be ended "by the consent of

a majority of the members of our civil government, in whom rests the sovereign power of reform, in the civil law code . . .," and he recommended that for those political leaders who refused to cooperate, "We Must Vote Them Down."[47] As encouraging as it sounded, it was also time consuming because it depended upon too many political elections in order to weed out proslavery advocates.

Jefferson's plan, which included nurturing by the master and then colonization, established certain criteria for the elimination of slavery. During his correspondence with Monroe following the slave insurrections of 1800, he began searching for a place to colonize blacks. He once entered into negotiations with Napoleon for the Island of Haiti, but the agreement failed.[48] After his retirement to Monticello, he received a letter from a Quaker woman in Philadelphia. Learning of his proposal, she recommended that he use his political influence to secure an area on the west coast of Africa in which freedmen could emigrate. He agreed to do what he could, but suggested that since he was now a private individual, the Federal Government should be approached with the intended project.[49] Much like Cuffe's idea, the War of 1812 ended any attempt for implementing the scheme.

When the Colonization Society was formed, it adopted some parts from each plan. By offering colonization, it persuaded slaveowners to emancipate and influenced state legislatures to relax manumission laws. It founded a colony

on the West Coast of Africa and offered a sanctuary for rescued Africans.

In contrast, Garrison labored under the influence of the immediate emancipationists. According to Evangelical ministers in the Second Great Awakening, "every individual had free will and moral ability to work out his own salvation."[50] Unlike the Calvinistic belief that predestination controlled a human's existence, they felt that man possessed complete power over his fate. If he continued his transgressions, he encountered retribution, but if he repented, then he could obtain absolution. However, he must reform immediately.

Because it was immoral for one man to own another, slavery constituted a sin, and slaveowners became sinners. Their salvation depended upon their desire to restore freedom to their slaves without haste.[51] Dedicated to this principle, some stalwart abolitionists realized that unless the slaveholder understood that he was immoral, slavery would continue. To these individuals, their direction appeared clear. They must awaken the sleeping sinner and offer repentance, because "Faith without works is dead."[52] Once the master became aware of his transgression, he had to emancipate. If he failed, then he contradicted all the values of Christianity and Republicanism, and he deserved the title of criminal. Since masters purchased kidnapped victims, and refused to restore liberty, freedmen became

thieves, and risked the fate of grave punishment for their crimes.[53]

Garrison adopted the method of spreading the word through what he termed "moral suasion." In his newspaper, he explained the rationale for immediate emancipation. He compared slavery to "an immense iceberg, larger and more impenetrable than any which floats in the Arctic Ocean, . . . and a little extra heat is not only pardonable, but absolutely necessary." He warned the slaveholder that "great crimes and destructive evils ought not be palliated, nor great sinners applauded. With reasonable men, I will reason; with humane men, I will plead; but to tyrants I will give no quarter, nor waste arguments where they will certainly be lost."[54] Rather than influencing slaveholders to emancipate, these stinging insults alienated them.

Because the Colonization Society upheld the principles of gradual abolition, Garrison accused members of placating the masters and perpetuating the system of slavery. Like most gradualists, Society members realized if slaves were freed too hastily without provisions being made for their future, the results would be devastating. To colonizationists, a country which provided equal rights and land contained the best hope for the freedmen, since the free states had already proven that white America was unwilling to accept blacks as citizens.[55]

Although Garrison believed his plan offered a peaceful solution, one problem persisted. When he established the

American Anti-Slavery Society, he included a provision which maintained that the Society would labor to provide equal rights for the freedmen. In all fairness to him, he did attempt to start a college for free blacks, but northern apathy prevented the project from materializing. Afterwards, he became vague as to how equality would be offered, and at the end of the Civil War, he resigned from the Society maintaining that his work was finished.[56] He felt slavery was the main problem, but he failed to realize the need for black education and vocational training. Even though he devoted his energies to the issue of "immediatism," did he believe that the future of blacks should be left to fate?

It is Nourished by Fear and Selfishness

Garrison charged that the plan of the Society was founded and nourished by fear and selfishness. Although he was correct about some of the members, who desired the removal of free blacks in order to increase control over the slaves, other reasons must also be examined. The founders of the Society had different motives for becoming involved in the project. The northern clergy realized that the freedmen suffered undo discrimination. For example, a violent confrontation occurred at Boston in 1797, when some free blacks applied for positions which normally were only performed by white men.[57] Denied employment, many freedmen committed crimes to feed themselves and their families. Following the abolition acts, free states passed laws

restricting the movement of the black. Appalled by the freedman's dilemma, ministers offered a solution.

Northern clergy members envisioned a golden opportunity to educate the black in theological doctrines and therefore, advance the Christianization of Africa. The action appeared to provide a positive reward. White education and customs, if properly applied, could influence native chieftains, and advance the African tribes.[58]

Still there were other colonizationists, both northern and southern, who longed for the end of slavery. They understood that many slaveowners, considering themselves to be pious, moral men, would not willingly free slaves voluntarily unless safety was assured. Believing that colonization offered the necessary incentive, it was hoped that slaveholders would react accordingly.[59] Considering some of these other motives, were colonizationists wholly selfish?

As usual, Garrison only quoted the words of some southern representatives who sought to draw off the black population. From one member's speech, he extracted "I am a Virginian--I dread for her the corroding evil of this numerous caste, and I tremble for the danger of a disaffection spreading through their seductions, among our servants."[60] However, the speaker continued "I am a man . . . I know that I, and all of us, have had our share in the institution which has brought them first to the degradation of slavery, and next binds them down to the baseness of

ineffectual freedom."[61] If Garrison accused the Society of perpetuating slavery because its members allied with slaveowners who refused to admit guilt, why did he fail to print the remainder of the address which clearly indicates an intense struggle between man and morality? Who was actually guilty of hiding the truth?

Slaveowners supported gradual freedom with colonization because they were afraid of rebellions. While the numerous slave insurrections of the early 1800's were caused by the liberating spirit of the American Revolution, the Nat Turner revolt showed signs of being agitated by the radical philosophy of the immediate emancipationists. Although never proven, many slaveholders believed the abolitionists provided the incentives for the violence that erupted.[62]

In May, 1831, just a few months after the first issue of the Liberator appeared, Garrison published a series of articles known as the "Walker Appeals." Disgusted with white society and slavery, the free black author predicted that, like Moses, a leader was coming who would unite freedmen and slaves to overthrow the white masters. Even though Garrison abhorred violence, he nevertheless agreed with the author. When a southerner once approached him and stated "Grant your opinions to be just, . . . if you talk so to the slaves, they will fall to cutting their masters' throats," Garrison bellowed "And in God's name, . . . why should they not cut their masters' throats?"[63] He believed this was retribution, not murder.

A month later, Garrison delivered an address to the Convention of the Free People of Color in Philadelphia. He forecasted that within the immediate future blacks in America would be freed from slavery and discrimination. In August, the famous Nat Turner revolt occurred, and some masters believed that one of Garrison's widely circulated pamphlets had been passed to the literate slave. To compound the issue, Garrison printed an editorial on the insurrection and warned that this rebellion was only the beginning. After reading these glaring remarks, slaveholders demanded the silencing of Garrison, since they were assured that by his own words, he convicted himself.[64]

Already alarmed by Garrison's rhetoric, southerners could not ignore the fact that the black population in the some areas of the south almost equaled half of the total residents. Considering the history of violent insurrections and the number of bondsmen, masters felt threatened about immediate emancipation, or liberation without emigration. Believing that ex-slaves would not be inclined to offer forgiveness after being chained for most of their lives, masters attached themselves to the American Colonization Society. While Garrison correctly assumed that slaveholders were afraid, the question was, what really frightened them: remaining slaveowners in an atmosphere of growing sectional differences, emancipating their slaves without emigration, or the increasing power of the radical abolitionists?

It Aims at the Utter Expulsion of the Blacks

When Garrison accused the American Colonization Society of seeking the emigration of all blacks, he offered little evidence to lend support for his accusation. For example, he quoted one colonizationist as stating that "We would say, LIBERATE THEM ONLY ON CONDITION OF THEIR GOING TO AFRICA OR TO HAYTI."[65] Placing the statement in context, the man intended the remark to be an argument against colonizing blacks in the trans-Mississippi territory.[66] From another speech, Garrison extracted the words of one member of the Colonization Society who maintained that ". . . Their [slaveowners] patriotism, their humanity, nay their self-interest, prompt to this; but it is not expedient, it is not safe to do it, without being able to remove them . . ."[67] Although Garrison correctly reprinted the statement, he failed to finish the thought of the Connecticut speaker. The northerner logically concluded that "If permitted to remain they sink into vice and indolence and ruin; and thus contaminate the slave population; and thus renders their future emancipation the more difficult and hopeless."[68]

Additionally, Garrison refused to acknowledge that unlike the British, who used deceptive practices in order to encourage blacks to colonize in Sierra Leone,[69] the colonizationists rejected compulsory deportation. In fact, Article II of the Society's Constitution explicitly stated that "The object to which its attention is to be exclusively directed, is to promote and execute a plan for colonizing

(with their consent) the free people of color residing in our country in Africa,. . . .."[70]

Some of Garrison's thoughts had been influenced by James Forten, an affluent free black from Philadelphia. Although Forten originally supported Cuffe's excursions to Africa, he later withdrew his approval because other black leaders envisioned forced emigration. After the founding of the American Colonization Society, representatives approached Forten and requested that he endorse their project. He swiftly refused, and then allied with other affluent free black leaders in order to form an anti-colonization movement. In January, 1817, they met at the Bethel Church in Philadelphia and resolved to oppose the Society's plan. Even though they presented a viable opposition, the city began a colonization chapter on July 23, 1817. Nevertheless, when Garrison needed financial assistance in order to publish the Liberator, Forten offered support without hesitation.[71]

Because several free black leaders promoted Garrisonianism, it appeared that Garrison's accusation against the Society was correct. However, by describing the background of some affluent freedmen, a certain pattern develops. While their ancestors labored in slavery, many free black leaders enjoyed freedom from birth. Normally, they learned a skill from a craftsman. Forten mastered sailmaking from an unusually tolerant man, and upon his employer's death, the young apprentice assumed control of

the company. Most claimed Philadelphia as their residence, and because of Quaker influence, they tended to profit economically from a more liberal atmosphere. They built sumptuous homes filled with fashionable furniture. Their children attended segregated public and private schools, but gained a quality education. They dressed in stylish clothes and maintained sizable wardrobes. Their community status reflected their lifestyle. Although they resided in isolated neighborhoods throughout the city, they transacted business with the white tradesmen. They insisted upon and received a certain amount of respect.[72]

By comparing this special group of free blacks with their lower class counterparts, it becomes questionable whether the anti-colonization viewpoint stems from benevolent motivation or personal desire. Because they occupied a much better position than others of their race, did they really understand the conditions of their black brothers? If Forten felt so deeply toward his fellow freedmen, why did he not employ all black workers in his business? Since many had obtained considerable fortunes, because of their fortuitous fate, why did they not pool their finances and construct businesses and assistance agencies? Was their demonstration against colonization based on concern over the fate of the freedmen, the slave, or themselves? Obviously, the answers lie in the statement of one free black leader who maintained that "Some people of color say that they have no home, no country. I am not

among that number. It is an empty declamation. It is unwise. It is not logical--it is false."[73]

The American Colonization Society attempted to calm the fears of the free black. It maintained that

> . . . A suggestion has been made to them, [free black] which this society disclaims by the terms of its constitution, that they are to be constrained to migrate to the country which may be selected for the seat of our colony. No suspicion can be more unfounded. It is sanctioned by no declarations or acts of this society, from which alone our intentions can be candidly inferred.[74]

While the Society sought to gain their favor, free blacks sided with Garrison. Therefore, it seemed that the colonizationists intended to rid the United States of the total black population.

Around the early 1830's, John Hartwell Cocke, a noted colonizationist and Virginia slaveowner, devised an experiment to determine whether slaves gained more opportunity from colonization in Africa or gradual freedom in America. After training one of his servants, Peyton Skipwith, as a stonemason, Cocke freed the slave and his family and sent them to Liberia. He chose Skipwith because of the slave's absolute temperance and Christian devotion. To the master, these traits encouraged responsibility, and in turn, qualified the slave for emancipation. Upon the Skipwiths' arrival in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, conditions appeared hopeless. Illness and financial difficulties plagued the family in the first year. However, within time, Monrovians started using stone for constructing

their houses, and Skipwith prospered. By the late 1830's, he enjoyed an honored place in both the community and the church. His children attended modern schools erected by the Protestant mission boards of America, and, after reaching adulthood, they also became affluent.[75]

Cocke insisted that his other slaves must first be educated before they could be emancipated and colonized. In 1841, he sent forty-nine slaves from his Virginia plantation to Hopewell, his farm in Alabama. The basis of Cocke's idea consisted of placing the blacks into a more relaxed atmosphere in exchange for adherence to five simple rules. Cocke insisted that at Hopewell there would be "No leaving the plantation without a written pass; No strange servants to be received without a pass"; No fighting; Nor provoking language to be used one to another; and Unconditional submission to the authorities I set over [you]."[76] According to Cocke, if the slaves obeyed his commands, and worked off their purchase price, he promised to free them after five years and send them to Liberia. Initially the slaves had a white overseer and a black slave driver. However, after they proved to Cocke that they were able to govern themselves, he discharged the overseer and increased the power of the slave driver. Unfortunately for the slaves, poor crop yield, racism, and cases of miscegenation prevented their emancipation until the Civil War. After the insurrection, some freedmen remained at Hopewell as sharecroppers, while others left the farm and foraged for

necessities. Even those who remained suffered from the violence of the Ku Klux Klan and impoverished conditions. Though many became educated at Hopewell, they acted illiterate because they feared white retribution.[77]

Although this was one specific case, Cocke's experiment raises several questions. Realizing the strict Alabama laws concerning slaves, would the blacks have fared better if they had received their freedom? By 1840, colonizationists realized that they could not depend upon financial assistance from Congress. Therefore, since Cocke paid for the first family's transportation to Liberia, why did he insist that the others pay for their own passage? Perhaps, he realized that not all emancipated slaves could be colonized. Finally, which group actually advanced: the blacks of Liberia or the slaves of Alabama?

It is the Disparager of the Free Blacks

Garrison charged the American Colonization Society with being the disparager of free blacks, claiming the Society belittled the freedmen's status. Since colonizationists actually approached Forten and other black leaders concerning the Liberian project, Garrison labored under a misconception. The Society desired the assistance of other free blacks because it believed that freedmen possessed the education, talent, and skill to further African emigration.

For example, the Society welcomed Lott Carey to Liberia. Born a slave in 1780, near Richmond, Virginia, Carey purchased freedom for himself and his children after working

as a "hire out" in a tobacco warehouse. He taught himself to read and write and became a member of a Baptist church at Richmond. As interest increased in Virginia concerning a movement to colonize blacks in Africa, Carey envisioned an opportunity. He began to manifest a deep concern with the heathen African tribes after he became an active church member. Together with other free Virginian blacks, he founded and supported the African Missionary Society. Members of this organization collected and forwarded annual annuities to fund missions located mainly in Sierra Leone. Even though this work stimulated Carey, he dreamed of the day he could deliver the word of God personally to the Africans.[78]

Coupled with his dedication to religion, Carey felt that discrimination and segregation enslaved the free black in America. When he turned his back on his farm and his position in order to emigrate, a colleague asked why he would leave such a comfortable surrounding to go to an unknown place. He replied, "I am an African, and in this country, however meritorious my conduct, and respectable my character, I cannot receive the credit due to either."[79] In 1817, he applied to the Baptist General Convention and the American Colonization Society for assistance in emigrating to Africa. Since the Society had not yet acquired property in Africa, Carey decided to emigrate to Sierra Leone. As soon as Liberia was formed, he moved his family down the coast. The Society's colonial agent not only accepted Carey

into the colony, but raised his status within the community. As the official lay dying, he recommended that Carey be appointed leader. Unfortunately, Carey perished before he received the positive confirmation from the Society's Board of Managers.[80]

Other free blacks interested members of the Society. John Brown Russwurm wrote for the Freedom's Journal, a publication which denounced African emigration. He published inflammatory articles concerning the evils of the colonizationists. However, through letters of the emigrees, Russwurm learned that conditions in Liberia, unlike America, promoted the free black. Convinced that Africa provided the only hope for American freedmen, he urged colonization. He maintained that in Africa "the Man of Colour . . . may walk forth in all the majesty of his creation--a new born creature--A Free Man!"[81] After suffering a barrage of criticism from immediate emancipationists, he resigned his position and emigrated to Liberia. He remained there for the rest of his life, assured that emancipation would become a reality only through colonization.

While the members of the American Colonization Society recruited affluent and educated free blacks, they were also concerned about freedmen who were relegated to a lower status. Because Garrison based his evidence upon some colonizationists' speeches and articles that dealt with the actions of some free blacks, he completely misunderstood the intentions. For instance, he extracted part of a statement

made by Charles Mercer, in which the Virginia slaveowner described the free black population as "a horde of miserable people--the objects of universal suspicion; subsisting by plunder."[82] Yet, Garrison refused to explain that Mercer made the remark as a comparison between the freedmen in Virginia and those of Philadelphia.[83] In another example, Garrison quoted Henry Clay as stating that the ". . . free people of color are . . . the most corrupt, depraved, and abandoned. . . . . They occupy a middle station between the free white population and the slaves of the United States, and the tendency of their habits is to corrupt both."[84] If Garrison had finished the statement, the reader would have realized that Clay also noted, "Place ourselves, place any men in the like predicament, and similar effects will follow."[85]

Garrison maintained that the colonizationists placed too much emphasis upon the criminal element in black society. He concluded that they belabored the point in order to sway public opinion against advancing the freedmen in America. Garrison failed to mention that out of the total population of free blacks in the nonslaveholding states, approximately one-third were incarcerated in prisons or poorhouses.[86]

The colonizationists believed that the plight of the free black could be attributed to a lack of civil rights in America. In addition to the degraded status of the northern freedmen, members of the Colonization Society studied the condition of the southern free black. They discovered that

in the State of Virginia less than one-half of one-percent of the freedmen population owned land. Furthermore, the colonizationists noted that in several southern states, the free black was forced to leave the state or risk being sold again into slavery. For example, Louisiana enacted legislation in 1825 requiring all free persons of color to relocate outside of the state boundaries. Although several refugees fled to Ohio, they encountered such vicious white reaction that they moved to Canada. Upon their arrival, Canadians threatened forcibly to remove them. These actions led one colonizationist to remark that "The South casts them off: the North has no place for them: the West pushes them away: Canada expels them: . . . They are . . . dislocated from humanity."[87]

If Garrison's charge against the Society was correct, then it should be noted that colonizationists believed that the free black was socially, politically, and economically degraded by white America. The American Colonization Society insisted that whites refused to change, and therefore, the only course left to the freedmen was colonization. The colonizationists exerted a great deal of labor in order to devise a method to ameliorate the condition of the free black. In contrast, Garrison's method appeared vague and ambiguous. He spoke about the need for education, but after encountering racial reaction, he developed no direct proposal for upgrading the status of free blacks. Garrison's failure to establish a definite

project leads to important questions. Since he seemed to know only free affluent blacks, did he understand that, like whites, freedmen constituted different socio-economic classes? Did he realize that because of discrimination free blacks experienced almost no social mobility? Finally, because he failed to construct an organized plan, did he criticize the colonizationists in order to gain favor with the free black leaders?

It Denies the Possibility of Elevating the Blacks in this Country

Garrison maintained that the American Colonization Society denied any possibility of elevating the blacks in America. Although he never explained how the American Anti-Slavery Society intended to provide equal rights, he berated the colonizationists for promoting emigration and equality for freedmen.

Thomas Jefferson, the father of the colonization movement in Virginia, realized that even if legislation prohibited slavery, racial tension would remain. He further noted that whites could detest slavery, and yet, still loath blacks. To prove his point, he cited several famous planters and slaveowners, such as Arthur Lee and Landon Carter, who believed that both the system of slavery and the black race were equally abhorrent.[88] Some northerners who shared this viewpoint included Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Webster, and John Quincy Adams. As late as 1862, Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, met with black leaders at

the White House. In their presence, he denounced the ability of the black race to integrate into white society, and suggested that they emigrate immediately rather than encourage white reaction.[89] Even Garrison suffered from this condition. He had welcomed Frederick Douglass into the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1839, but the former slave soon learned that his position consisted of "tokenism". By 1851, Douglass left Garrison's organization because he felt that abolitionists only used the slaves to change public opinion.[90]

In order to control the freed slaves, northern states enacted legal measures to prohibit movement of the black race. These laws included placing restrictions upon voting, housing, employment, and social interaction. Because of these conditions, northern freedmen exhibited different types of behavior. Some became introverted. Like the old days of slavery, they again slipped on the veil of obedience and lived out their lives dependent upon the temperament of white ex-masters. Others demonstrated anger and insolence. To them, white America owed them an existence. Out of revenge, they robbed, vandalized, and taunted white residents. Their actions led one colonizationist from New Hampshire to remark that "They could never forget their wrongs. . . . By a law of human nature, I mean of human depravity, the man who has injured a fellow being, becomes from that moment, his enemy."[91] The most pitiful free blacks occupied the remaining group. These individuals

waited for white America to realize its error and accept black equality. They committed crimes not from vengeance, but from the necessity to survive. Black debtors and black criminals filled poorhouses and prisons, and their squalor filled the sewers of the city streets.[92] Abolitionists barely acknowledged the freedmen's existence, but colonizationists understood that prejudice undermined any hope for the future of free blacks.

Southern colonizationists understood that the system of slavery was based not only upon economic need, but also on social prejudice. Like their northern counterparts, southerners also passed legislation in order to control the movement of the freedmen and slaves. States required both bondsmen and free blacks to carry passes whenever they traveled about the countryside. Furthermore, courts meted out punishments for blacks who attempted to preach or organize and attend meetings held for religious purposes.[93]

Unlike the abolitionists, the colonizationists realized that the root of bias stemmed from the fear of miscegenation. The thought of the two races mixing repulsed white America. As early as colonial times, officials passed laws restricting interracial marriage. Most northern courts not only punished blacks and whites for such transgressions, but also levied equal penalties for ministers who married a mixed couple. As slaves gained freedom after the Revolution, whites felt threatened because free blacks enjoyed more movement than bondsmen. Colonies, therefore,

re-enforcd the old statutes by ensuring that the new constitutions included the prohibition of racial mixing.[94]

In the south, the black population almost equaled the white population, and residents became paranoid about preserving racial purity. Even though the laws appeared to be similar to northern mandates in cases of rape or attempted molestation,[95] officials and masters carefully separated blacks and whites. For example, Edward Coles, a Virginia slaveowner, and a private secretary to James Madison, recommended that his neighbor, Thomas Jefferson, endorse a plan to save the Illinois territory from slavery. Coles proposed to sell his farm around Charlottesville, "and establish his slaves as free men on farms on the free soil of Illinois."[96] He hoped that other Virginian slaveholders would follow his lead and react accordingly. Unfortunately, Jefferson refused to acknowledge the project because he felt that if free blacks gained property then they would demand equal rights. He further concluded that equality would lead to amalgamation, and as he raved to Coles, that condition "produces a degradation to which no lover of his country, no lover of excellence in the human character, can innocently consent."[97] Nevertheless, Coles refused to follow Jefferson's advice to stay in Virginia. While he still believed in colonization, Coles moved to Illinois. He settled his slaves as freedmen near Edwardsville, and, as Governor in 1824, managed to defeat pro-slavery forces who

wanted to legalize slavery by amending the Illinois Constitution.[98]

The colonizationists understood that prejudice dictated a certain social and political status of both freedmen and slave in America, but Garrison failed to recognize the influence. It appeared, however, that Garrison was biased. When he was jailed in Baltimore in 1830, he overheard the conversation between a fugitive slave and a master. After the meeting, Garrison lectured the slaveowner concerning the evils of slavery. Suddenly, the slaveholder asked Garrison how he felt about blacks. After Garrison replied that he would be willing to vote for a black for President, the southerner posed this inquiry: "How would you like to have a black man marry your daughter?" Garrison swiftly answered "Sir, I am not familiar with <u>your</u> practices; but allow me to say, that slaveholders generally should be the last persons to affect fastidiousness on that point; for they seem to be enamoured with <u>amalgamation</u>."[99] Garrison's tactical statement allowed him to remain dedicated to the cause without actually professing anything.

In addition, Garrison accused the Colonization Society of advocating and perpetuating the ignorance of the blacks. He berated them because colonizationists insisted that education must precede emancipation, and therefore, he concluded that the Society prohibited black instruction in America. He extracted a partial article from a newspaper in Indiana which maintained that ". . . the negro cannot, in

this country, become an enlightened and useful citizen."[100] Garrison left out the most crucial part of the column which stated that "Gerrit Smith of Petersborough, New York, has the design of establishing, . . . a Seminary for the education of pious and promising young men of colour, who are desirous of qualifying themselves for the Gospel ministry."[101]

Aside from the many educational institutes, in Liberia, both lower and upper division, Garrison refused to acknowledge the schools opened in America by some of the founders of the Colonization Society.[102] Ironically, one of Garrison's followers even praised the colonizationists for their efforts to educate future colonists since it would tend "to enlighten Africa, to raise the character of the negroes, to strengthen the increasing liberality of public opinion, and to check the diabolical slave-trade."[103]

To Garrison, the colonizaionists perceived prejudice as a permanent, immovable force in America. He criticized them because they felt that true integration was based upon the acceptance of miscegenation. They realized that without the social interaction of the races, white superiority would always dictate the status of the black minority. In contrast, the Garrisonians insisted upon civil rights. Unfortunately for the freedmen and the slave, the abolitionists never defined an appropriate plan that would ensure equality. According to Garrison, blacks would naturally be accepted into white society because:

> . . . My Bible assures me that the day is coming when even the 'wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the wolf and the young lion and the fatling together;' and if this be possible, I see no cause why those of the same species--God's rational creatures--fellow-countrymen, in truth, cannot dwell in harmony together.[104]

Obviously, Garrison possessed sincere intentions, but he lacked practicality.

It Deceives and Misleads the Nation

Garrison's last accusation charged the Colonization Society with deceiving and misleading the nation. Colonizationists, he claimed, led American citizens to believe that their plan constituted an efficient and effective end to slavery. He extracted a portion of an article by the Central Gazette in Charlottesville, Virginia, which maintained ". . . that the colonization scheme contemplates the ultimate abolition of slavery, yet that result could only be produced by the gradual and slow operation of CENTURIES."[105] Unfortunately, Garrison did not print the most important idea of the author, that the project seemed to be "expedient and feasible."[106]

The term gradualism puzzled Garrison. He concluded that the rate of natural increase complicated the gradualists' efforts to obtain total emancipation. To him, the manumission of one slave made little difference, if two more were born. He insisted that only a swift and immediate method would tip the balance for complete abolition. Garrison, however, failed to understand that his own design

for ending the institution equally complicated the situation.[107]

The Garrisonians utilized moral suasion as their vehicle to eliminate slavery. They believed that enslavement was a transgression, and those slaveholders who refused to emancipate, remained in a state of sin. The abolitionists, therefore, formed an intricate network of writers, publishers, teachers, clergymen, and others to enlighten the slaveowner about repentance. They prodded and prompted the masters with articles and speeches. In addition, they attempted to raise a social awareness among the nonslaveholding public in order to recruit new abolitionists, and to promote peer pressure. Earlier in Garrison's career, he even organized a boycott against products produced by slave labor.[108]

Even though Garrison's measures stimulated a moral awakening, he failed to establish a time limit. He criticized the Colonization Society because their project included a slow and cumbersome operation; yet he refused to realize that his process shared a similar weakness. One of his followers even admitted that ". . . the work of abolition must necessarily be slow in its progress . . ."[109] Garrison further berated the colonizationists for only sending some two thousand emigres in fifteen years.[110] The period actually covered only twelve years, because potential colonists did not start emigrating until 1820. Furthermore, with the exception of one year, from 1826 to

1832, officials of Liberia welcomed a steady increase of new residents.[111] Although Garrison raised a valid point concerning the feasibility of the colonizationists' plan, it is interesting to note that he lacked similar criteria for setting a timetable for the elimination of slavery.

Garrison accused the Colonization Society of arguing that founding of colonies would pave the way for the abolition of the African slave trade. A law included in the U.S. Constitution prohibited the importation or migration of African slaves after 1807. Unfortunately, the young nation possessed no armed forces that could be used to enforce such measures. By the time the Colonization Society was founded in 1816, slave traders violated the mandate at an alarming rate. Within a month after the formation of the organization, members presented a petition to Congress which requested that the trafficking in slaves immediately be stopped. After one year, they repeated their action. In 1819, Charles Mercer, a colonizationist from Virginia, assisted in writing and securing passage of the Anti-Slave Trade Act of March 3, 1819.[112]

The terms of the measure stated that "Africans illegally taken from their native land and recaptured by the authorities of the United States Government were to be returned to the coast of Africa." It also maintained that federal agents be appointed "to look after such recaptured slaves upon their return."[113] Another measure of the bill provided the President with the power to employ warships

for cruising the African coast in search of potential violators. In addition, the Society convinced the government to authorize the President to "make such regulations and arrangements as he may deem expedient for the safekeeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States, of all such negroes, . . . and to appoint . . . agents for receiving the negroes . . . seized in the prosecution of the slave trade."[114] On December 17, 1819, President Monroe addressed Congress and confirmed his assistance in the matter. In addition, the colonizationists influenced the passage of a law on May, 15, 1820, that declared slavetrading an act of piracy punishable by death.[115]

Liberia became such an important barrier for the enforcement of the African Slave Trade Law that by 1826, a French trader threatened to invade the colony because it interfered with "his business." Although the invasion never occurred, officials ordered fortresses to be reconstructed and the militia to be strengthened. One colonizationist even urged the Society to obtain territory which would measure the length of Africa and the width of at least a single mile for protection.[116] Ironically, because the colony increased its defenses, it possessed the capability of terrorizing slave factories, and on one occasion, colonists even rescued over fifty Africans before they boarded the ship for departure.[117]

Since colonizationists aided in passing vital legislation concerning the enforcement of the African Slave Trade, were Garrison's accusations of misleading a nation correct? If Liberia provided assistance in rescuing and returning captured Africans, did the Colonization Society lie to the American public concerning the attributes of the colony? Garrison maintained that the only way to stop the slave trafficking was to eliminate slavery. He criticized the Society for contributing "nothing toward the suppression of the slave trade in fifteen years!"[118] However, considering the attempts and accomplishments of the members, did he, as he so often insisted, speak the truth?

ENDNOTES

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[7]Ibid., April, 1825, p. 39.

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[9]Early Lee Fox, The American Colonization Society, 1817-1840, (Ph.D. dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1919), p. 213.

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[13]ACS, First Annual Report, pp. 19-20. Brown, Biography of Rev. Robert Finley, pp. 93-94.

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[16]Garrison, Thoughts, p. 62.

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[18]Garrison, Thoughts, p. 62.

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[28]Garrison, Thoughts, p. 70.

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[31]Garrison, Thoughts, p. 69.

[32]African Repository, May, 1830, p. 69.

[33]Carroll, Slave Insurrections, p. 65.

[34]P. [Philip] Slaughter, The Virginian History of African Colonization, (Richmond: Macfarlane and Fergusson, 1855; reprint ed., Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), pp. 9-10.

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[42]Liberator, July 30, 1836.

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[57]Greene, Negro, p. 304f.

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[98]Ibid.

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[106]African Repository, September, 1829, p. 217.

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[109]Child, An Appeal, p. 142.

[110]Garrison, Thoughts, p. 151.

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[118]Garrison, Thoughts, p. 160.

CHAPTER IV

THE AFTERMATH

Garrison once embraced the idea of colonization, but his early issues of the Liberator emphasized the perils of black emigration. In an interview with one colonizationist, he boasted haughtily that he would criticize the American Colonization Society even "if he knew it would evangelize the whole of Africa!"[1] To him, the direction was clear: the Society supported gradual abolition, and therefore, the public would never accept immediate emancipation unless the colonizationists were discredited.

Although Garrison intended that the Liberator would elicit support from free blacks, he hoped that Thoughts on African Colonization would appeal to whites. In his quest to proselytize colonizationists, he hurled insults and innuendoes at the Society and its friends. His first convert was Arthur Tappan.

When Garrison lingered in a Baltimore jail after being convicted of libel, Tappan, a New York City philantropist and businessman, paid his fine. While still professing a strong belief in colonization, Tappan surreptitiously financed the printing costs of Garrison's Thoughts on Africian Colonization. By 1833, Tappan became disgusted with the Colonization Society, because he felt that Liberia was being drenched with liquor.[2]

Ironically, members also voiced their concerns over the trafficking of rum. Robert Finley, son of the founder, maintained that "the traffic in ardent spirit is a greater crime than the slave trade, because it supports the slave trade."[3] Finley contended that the colony had made excellent strides in curbing the excessive use of not only liquor, but also gunpowder and firearms. However, the Board of Managers were not satisfied. They wanted complete reform. Finley then proposed to have the New York Colonization Society establish a settlement based solely on temperance principles. He further recommended that all future emigrants be formed into temperance societies, and that the substance be outlawed as a form of use and trade. Members unanimously adopted the measures.[4]

These incentives failed to change Tappan's decision. In a letter, dated March 26, 1833, addressed to Lewis F. Laine, Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society in the Theological Seminary at Andover, he confessed that "I used the little influence I had with the society to obtain a prohibition of the admission of ardent spirits into the colony; with what success may be seen in the fact, that no less than fourteen hundred barrels of the liquid poison have been sold there within a year."[5] When the communication was reprinted in the African Repository, the editor indicated that Tappan believed slavery was perpetuated because liquor was being sold in the colony. Tappan swiftly forwarded a reply to Rev. R. R. Gurley, Secretary for the American Colonization

Society. Tappan insisted that he "certainly drew no such inference from such premises, as a re-perusal of my letter will satisfy any candid mind." However, he maintained "that I had received from the agent of the Colonization Society the statement, 'that ardent spirits was an indispensable article of trade at the colony.' This inference is correct."[6] It seemed that Tappan's conversion was indicative of a strong aversion to alcohol and not Garrison's radical charges against the Society.

The next convert to be added to the list of Garrisonian disciples was James Gillespie Birney. Birney, a slaveholding lawyer from Kentucky, joined the cause of colonization in the summer of 1832. Swayed by Theodore Weld, at this time an ardent orator on temperance and education, Birney became the Society's agent for the Southwestern district. The Society paid him one thousand dollars plus traveling expenses. While this sum appeared large to others, it only constituted one-fourth of the income from his law practice. Always the devout family man, he wondered whether he should deprive his wife and children of material comforts. In the end, he graciously agreed to represent the Society and received his official authorization at the end of July. After forwarding his formal acceptance on August 23, he recommended a specific plan of action which consisted of assuring state legislatures that the Society did not seek to interfere with property rights. Additionally, he suggested, that an

expedition be sent to Liberia, as an emotional appeal to plantation owners, and he concluded that the state colonization society in Alabama must be revived.[7]

While traveling through the south, canvassing prospective society members, Birney encountered resistance. In some cases, southerners had been frightened by the threats of northern abolitionists and refused to listen to any antislavery rhetoric. Others attended lectures and sat attentively, but failed to act. Even though he made some progress, Birney became distraught by November, 1833, and returned to Kentucky.[8]

In the Spring of 1834, the famous slavery debates occurred at Lane Seminary in Ohio. For eighteen days, southern students joined those from the north and expounded the cruelties and horrors of slavery. Their testimony became so intense that President Lyman Beecher attempted to discipline the students for introducing such radical discussion. However, his efforts proved fruitless, and the young men, led by Theodore Weld, left the school. After following the activities from a distance, Birney decided to travel to Cincinnati and consult with his old friend, Weld. Since their last meeting, Weld had totally embraced the ideas of the Garrisonians. Although not as radical as Garrison, Weld nevertheless believed slavery to be a sin and demanded that slavery end immediately.[9]

Upon Birney's arrival in Ohio, Weld and other students convinced the Kentucky colonizationists that their method

was the best. Before Birney left, he confided to Weld that he was ready to adopt immediatism, "if I can see a fair prospect of providing for my family."[10] In return for Birney's conversion, which Weld insisted would help influence other prominent men, "Weld secured promises from the Tappans that they would find work for Birney." Later, the Tappans offered Birney fifteen hundred dollars a year to accept the position of an agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society.[11] To them, it must have been an excellent find, an actual slaveowner who repented.

Birney resigned as a Vice President of the Kentucky Colonization Society in May, 1834. One month later, he freed his slaves. If one considers that this grand gesture came from the same man who once declared that "Should I remove from this state [Kentucky], I shall send all the slaves I own to Liberia,"[12] his motive becomes confusing. The effort was crucial, because he could not accept an appointment as an antislavery advocate while possessing slaves. Furthermore, Birney knew the law, enjoyed speaking, and became enthralled with politics. Considering Birney's subsequent nomination for President on the Liberty Party ballot in 1840, were his motives in 1834 benevolent or political?

With the assistance of Birney, Weld secured another convert who commanded just as much importance. Gerrit Smith, who was a New York businessman, made large contributions to the Society. In private, Weld told Birney

that "If that man could be divorced from the delusive sorcery of Colonizationism, an immense and incalculable influence would be secured to the cause of Abolition."[13] In less than a month Birney forwarded a letter to Smith in which he maintained that

> you are unconsciously exerting a more powerful influence than any man living, . . . if you were publicly to assure the great and soul-stirring principle, that man cannot be made the property of man, and that every master should, at once, restore to the slave his rights . . . you would do more for the cause of Liberty . . . than any other man in our country.[14]

Birney continued to inundate Smith with communications asking him to renounce the Colonization Society. In the late autumn of 1835, he requested that Smith make a "formal separation--somewhat in the way I did--and giving your reasons for it."[15] Smith finally relented and issued a public explanation concerning his decision.

Actually, Birney's pressure only aided Smith's course. After Garrison's publication, Smith demanded that the Society issue a statement confirming that it was <u>not</u> an antislavery organization. He maintained that its Constitution included only the colonization of the free black. To Smith, Garrison damaged the credibility of the Society because members sought to unite with slaveholders in order to eliminate slavery. It therefore appeared that the Society apologized for slaveowning. Smith concluded that Liberia was too important a project to risk apathy from New England colonizationists who were closing their doors until

the parent society replied to the Garrisonians. Unfortunately, the Colonization Society remained quiet, and Smith accused them of being too involved with antislavery and not enough with colonizing free blacks. He submitted his resignation after graciously paying the pledges that he had promised and joined the ranks of the abolitionists.[16] Although his motives appeared ambiguous, Smith left the Society after it suffered heavy financial losses.

In addition to these converts and some others whose proselytizing was not quite as shocking, the Society encountered other problems after Garrison's publication. With Tappan's financial assistance, Garrison placed free copies of his book in libraries and reading rooms in colleges and seminaries. He sent complimentary copies to editors and clergymen, and in the summer of 1832, toured New England distributing even more issues. To the Society's dismay, he had used dated articles of the African Repository, assorted pamphlets, and minute features of unfamiliar newspapers as evidence. Since his sources were obscure, and to a certain extent inaccessible, readers were unable to check his information. Even though some colonization members demanded that the parent society offer a counterattack, Secretary Gurley preferred to remain silent and hoped the storm would pass. Actually, Garrison had taken the colonizationists by surprise, and even they lacked the compilation of material that he possessed.[17]

Late in 1832, Gurley violated the self-imposed silence and published a pamphlet accusing Garrison of unfairness. The Boston editor swiftly replied that the "long-awaited remarks were flimsy and irrelevant."[18] Other members followed Gurley's lead and launched a barrage of criticism aimed at the abolitionists. However, the damage appeared irreparable.

Gurley faced an even greater dilemma. Agents, including himself, toured both northern and southern states in hopes of counteracting the influence of Garrison and his followers. While supporters in Virginia warned the Society to use care when speaking of antislavery, northern supporters, especially those of New England, demanded a solid statement. Gurley realized that by choosing one geographic location, the Society risked losing support from the other. Although he preferred working with southerners in order to effect a solution, he proposed a reorganization of the Society. In his plan, control fell to the northerners, since they possessed more state auxiliaries and were able to contribute more money. The proposal failed by a sixty-three to fifty-seven vote.[19]

As auxiliaries closed, both in the north and south, the Society's treasury became depleted. In an effort to raise revenue, and also in hopes of gaining external support, Elliot Cresson, a stalwart Pennsylvanian colonizationist, set sail for England. Upon his arrival, he encountered some varied reactions. Although he possessed letters of

introduction, Zachary Macaulay, Governor of Sierra Leone, refused an interview concerning African colonization. Cresson assumed that the old gentleman envied the success of Liberia. Much to his dismay, Cresson discovered that many of the once friendly British antislavery men resented his presence in Britain. Considering that they were involved with the passage of the West India Emancipation Act, their apathy was well founded. Angered over his cold reception, Cresson declared a mini-war on the British Anti-Slavery Society because he felt they had become extremists. Through pamphlets, lectures, and debates he criticized their actions. They countered with accusations that the Colonization Society fostered race hatred. Within a year, Cresson wearied of his private confrontation. He felt abused and disappointed because of his treatment. However, he did gain some ground, and just as he was about to organize a British Colonization Society, his greatest foe arrived in England.[20]

Unlike members of the British Anti-Slavery Society, Garrison was delighted to hear of Cresson's presence. Although the abolitionist came to England in search of funds to establish an all black college in the United States, he soon forgot his original purpose and set out to destroy the Colonization Society by damaging the reputation of the Pennsylvania Quaker. After being inundated with formal challenges from Garrison to debate, Cresson finally agreed. Garrison took great pains in arranging the event.

Surrounded by his friends, he chose an area which was traditionally hostile to colonizationists. During the meeting, Garrison reiterated his charges as published in his book. When Cresson was called on to deny the charges, several of Garrison's associates taunted and jeered him. Out of desperation, Cresson muttered that "under existing circumstances, and with such a chairman (James Cropper), and such a lecturer and such a meeting, I should hold it unworthy of myself to enter upon any discussion,"[21] and left the stage. Cresson vented his anger upon Gurley, since he charged that the Secretary failed to send him updated copies of the African Repository, and therefore, his information was antiquated. In one letter to Gurley, he ranted, "Do you mean to drive me mad?"[22] He never forgave Gurley for the action.

Before Cresson left Great Britain, he proposed an idea that would cement Sierra Leone and Liberia into the "Empire of Liberia" with the financial assistance from the British government. His hopes soon faded when Garrison's antislavery friends published a damaging protest and several pamphlets aimed at discrediting colonization.[23] Cresson returned to the United States disillusioned and disgusted not only with Garrison and the British abolitionists, but also with Gurley.

An unrelated event occurred in 1833 that affected the conflict between the two societies. A brief panic ensued when President Jackson fought with Nicholas Biddle over the

national bank. While depression edged closer, several auxiliary societies closed their doors and stopped contributing to the Society's treasury. In addition, two state societies, Maryland and Mississippi, formed their own colonies on the West Coast of Africa close to Liberia. Anger mixed with confusion, and finally, violence erupted. Riots between colonizationists and abolitionists occurred in New York City, July, 1834; in Utica, New York, October, 1835; and in Cincinnati, July, 1836. In November, 1837, a mob identifying with African colonization, attacked and murdered the stalwart abolitionist, Elijah Lovejoy, in Alton, Illinois. Although the parent society disassociated itself from any violence, it suffered from innuendoes and insults.[24]

In the late 1830's and early 1840's, the Society encountered more financial problems. While the depression gripped most of the country, the threats made by the abolitionists frightened the south into believing that any form of antislavery signaled doom. One colonizationist agent even discovered that many men in Savannah, Georgia "assumed that Garrison and colonizationists were 'coadjutors' and equally reprehensible."[25] In the north and west, colonizationists and antislavery advocates unleashed even more violence. These actions led to the closings of numerous auxiliary socities. The Colonization Society not only labored under a deficit, but its very foundations had splintered. Finally, out of desperation, the Society

reorganized in 1838. It reassembled as a federation of state auxiliaries. In proportion to its contributions, each state was allowed a representative on the new Board of Directors. New York and Pennsylvania controlled the entity, and a new business agent, ruling with an iron hand, started repairing the Society's finances. Through a large number of legacies gained in 1846, the Society finally paid off its debt. Because of low revenue reserve, the Society ordered Liberia to proclaim its independence in 1846. Reluctantly, the colony agreed. Afterwards, the Colonization Society entered a new phase and became an emigration agency. Instead of seeking answers to slavery, it accepted the role of helper and supporter for potential emigrants.[26]

The war had ended and Garrison was the undisputed victor. He continued to hurl insults and jeers at southern slaveowners. As for the colonizationists, some remained in the new organization, while others left in hopes of repairing differences, and still others went home and waited for the impending doom.

ENDNOTES

[1]Staudenraus, African Colonization Movement, p. 196. See also: Garrison, Thoughts, pp. 3-4.

[2]Lewis Tappan, The Life of Arthur Tappan, (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1871; reprint ed., Westport, Connecticut: Negro Universities Press, 1970), p. 129.

[3]The American Colonization Society, The Seventeenth Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States,* 93 vols. (Washington, D.C.: p.n., 1834; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969),17: IV.

*Any further reference to this report will be identified as ACS, Seventeenth Annual Report.

[4]Ibid., p. V.

[5]Tappan, Life of Arthur Tappan, p. 129.

[6]Ibid., p. 131.

[7]Betty Fladeland, James Gillespie Birney: Slaveholder to Abolitionist, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1955), pp. 51-5. See also: William Birney, James G. Birney and His Times, (n.p.: D. Appleton and Company, 1890; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), p. 109.

[8]Fladeland, James Gillespie Birney, pp. 58-60, and 74.

[9]Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, pp. 128-9.

[10]Ibid., pp. 80-1. See also: Birney, James G. Birney and His Times, pp. 135-7, and Staudenraus, African Colonization Movement, p. 229.

[11]Stauderaus, African Colonization Movement, p. 229.

[12]Birney to Ralph R. Gurley, January 14, 1833. James Gillespie Birney, Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857, ed. by Dwight L. Dumond, 1 vols, (Gloucester, Massachusetts: Peter Smith, 1966), 1:52. See also: Fladeland, James Gillespie Birney, pp. 82-3.

[13]Theodore Weld to Birney, October 10, 1834. Birney, Letters, 1:48.

[14]Birney to Gerrit Smith, November 14, 1834. Ibid., pp. 150-51.

[15]Birney to Smith, November 11, 1835. Ibid., p. 261.

[16]ACS, Seventeenth Annual Report, pp. IX and X. See also: Stauderaus, African Colonization Movement, p. 231. and Fox, American Colonization Society, p. 176.

[17]Stauderaus, African Colonization Movement, pp. 200-4.

[18]Ibid., p. 203.

[19]Ibid., pp. 205, 206, and 208.

[20]Ibid., 216-7.

[21]Ibid., p. 218. See also: Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, p. 70.

[22]Stauderaus, African Colonization Movement, p. 218.

[23]Ibid. For the actual "protest", see: G. B. Stebbins, Facts and Opinions Touching the Real Origin, Character, and Influence of the American Colonization Society: Views of Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Others, and Opinions of the Free People of Color of the United States, (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1853; reprint ed., New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), pp. 213-4; See also: James Cropper, The Extinction of the American Colonization Society, The First Step to the Abolition of American Slavery, (London: S. Bagster, 1833), pp. 3-24, and William Tremble, The Liberian Crusade, (Louth, n.p.: J. and J. Jackson, 1833), pp. 2-8.

[24]Richards, Gentlemen, p. 30.

[25]Stauderaus, African Colonization Movement, p. 221.

[26]Ibid., pp. 327-42.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Although the colonizationists faded quietly into obsurity after Garrison's victory, two questions still remained--was the American Colonization Society an antislavery organization, and did it provide assistance for the freedmen?

By the turn of the 19th Century, slavery gripped America so tenaciously that several concerned citizens searched for an easy way to resolve the issue. Colonization seemed to offer a two-fold opportunity. Slaves could be freed, and guilt would be absolved without retribution.

The Colonization Society believed that only slow, gradual emancipation would eliminate slavery and still keep the country intact. Members felt that if they developed a broad base of interest, they could attract southerners as well as northerners and gain governmental assistance for their project.

In contrast, the Garrisonian abolitionists demanded immediate justice. To them, the institution had existed too long, and gradual freedom meant only prolonged slavery. They insisted that the government protected the institution and therefore refused to participate in elections. Although their viewpoint appeared correct, they did not realize the

danger because Garrison and most of his followers did not understand how entrenched the system was in the south.

A number of Garrison's charges had validity. He claimed that the Society's objective could never be accomplished because the black population was too large, and at the rate of natural increase, total emancipation through colonization was impossible. For example, in its ninety-three year history, the Society transported only fifteen thousand three hundred eighty-six freedmen and slaves. Garrison maintained that the Society did not oppose slavery and because of the influence of slaveholders it sought to expel the free black population. He insisted that the members were bigoted. To a certain extent, he was correct. Yet, the colonizationists deserve recognition for having attempted a workable and peaceful solution to the problem of slavery.

Was the Colonization Society a true antislavery movement? The answer was definitely yes. Members influenced slaveowners to free slaves. They presented memorials to Congress and canvassed prospective contributors in order to obtain money for emigration purposes. While working with state legislatures and the federal government, they provided a sanctuary for illegially seized Africans. However, their slow, conservative methods were overshadowed by Garrison's increasing radicalism.

Did the American Colonization Society attempt to aid the free black? Members founded a colony where blacks could emigrate. They financed voyages and offered food supplies

and materials. In order to educate blacks for Liberia, they estalished schools.

Unlike Garrison, Colonizationists attacked the root of slavery and not just the stem. They believed that full integration could not be accomplished unless racism was elminated. Furthermore, they felt that amalgamation would never be tolerated in a white majority. To them, freedmen would gain more opportunity in a country that would allow black participation.

Ironically, after Garrison discredited the Colonization Society, other emigration plans were proposed. During the Civil War, President Lincoln and his cabinet actively sought colonization projects. For example, Congress appropriated money, chartered ships, and advertised in the New York Times for potential colonists to settle in Ile a Vache. Some five hundred individuals left in the spring of 1863, but after encountering inclement weather, disease, and extortion, they returned to the United States. As the confrontation drew to an end, Wendell Phillips, leader of the American Anti-Slavery Society after Garrison vacated, suggested that southern lands be confiscated and colonized by blacks under the supervision of northern officials.

After Reconstruction, the Colonization Society kept its doors open hoping to assist the freedmen who suffered discrimination. When southern states passed the infamous Jim Crow laws, Bishop Henry Turner, a black leader with the African Methodist Church, contacted the Society and

prompted blacks to return to Africa in the 1890's. Other blacks organized their own colonization movements. In 1916, a black Jamaican, Marcus Garvey, founded the United Negro Improvement Association. As part of his plan, which was based on W.E.B. DuBois' black nationialism, he recommended a back to Africa movement. Utilizing Liberia as his base of operation, he attempted to develop an all black trading company and a new settlement. Even though, he conflicted with the Preisdent of the African country and was deported, he attracted a large following and influenced black leaders. While blacks promoted colonization to avoid segregation, they hoped to develop a black nationalism.

What did Garrison accomplish by attacking the Colonization Society? He influenced public opinion for antislavery, increased the status of his own organization, and inadvertently aided emancipation. However, what did he do for the freedmen? Unlike the Colonizationists, he believed that black Americans were citizens and should be provided equal rights, but he did not provide a concrete plan to prevent segregation. To Garrison, the elimination of slavery resolved the problem. Therefore, in 1865, he resigned from the American Anti-Slavery Society maintaining that his work was finished. While he possessed sincere intentions, he failed to understand that freedom was not equality.

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